O.P. 3/27/42

REFERENCE LIBRARY OF

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

2 Park Street, Boston

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE SHELVES
EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF
THE LIBRARIAN

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS. *
Archive
Collection
This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

VOLUME IV

BRITAIN IN THE TROPICS

1527-1910

BY

A. WYATT TILBY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1916

Printed in Great Britain

PREFACE

The chief difficulty which faces the historian of British influence in the tropics is that there is seldom any political or commercial connecting link between our scattered possessions in those regions, beyond the fact that all acknowledge the same flag, and all are subject to certain limited similarities of climate. Apart from India, where the vastness of the theme demands separate treatment, the tropical dependencies of Britain are mostly small and generally isolated from one another; and while Canada, Australia, and South Africa easily find their proper place as the larger jewels in a crown of empire that encircles the earth, the lesser tropical dependencies more nearly resemble the small stones that one sometimes sees strewn carelessly over the jeweller's counter. Many are extremely beautiful; a few are very valuable. Some, albeit little better than common pebbles, have yet a curious record of vicissitudes attaching to their name that demands a fuller account than their actual importance would otherwise justify. Many shone brilliantly enough at first, but time has long since dimmed their lustre; others, again, are newly acquired, and possess properties not yet fully realised. But all are scattered loosely round the girdle of the globe; even the groups that are geographically akin are politically separated.

Chronologically, however, the subject divides naturally into two great periods: the first, during which slavery was the recognised industrial and social basis of every tropical plantation; the second, when slavery was prohibited after a long struggle between public opinion and private interest in England. Happily the time has come when the passions roused by that struggle have subsided, and a cool, impartial treatment of the whole question is possible; happily, too, a third period has now opened out before the white man in the tropics. The advance of medical science in recent years, and the preventive treatment of tropical diseases, which is still almost in its infancy, will probably do more to revolutionise the conditions of life in the tropics in the twentieth century than even the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth.

A. Wyatt Tilby.

31*st December* 1911.

CONTENTS

PAGE
PREFACE v

BOOK XII

THE AMERICAN TROPICS: 1527-1900

CHAP.
I. ENGLAND IN SOUTH AMERICA: 1527-1900 1
II. THE WEST INDIES: 1805-1900 23

BOOK XIII

THE EUROPEAN INVASION OF AFRICA: 1440-1807

I. THE DARK CONTINENT 66
II. THE FIRST BRITISH STATIONS: 1618-1807 80
III. SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE: 1440-1865 87

BOOK XIV

THE AFRICAN TROPICS: 1808-1910

I. THE WEST AFRICAN SETTLEMENTS: 1808-1900 142
II. BRITISH EAST AFRICA: 1823-1901 177
III. EGYPT AND THE SUDAN: 1882-1911 196
IV. THE MEDICAL REVOLUTION: 1900-10 256

BOOK XV

THE ASIATIC TROPICS: 1579-1910

CHAP. PAGE
I. The Dominance of Europe 274
II. The Eastern Seas: 1579-1824 283
III. The Malay Peninsula: 1786-1910 300
IV. Brooke of Borneo: 1839-1910 317
V. Ceylon: 1795-1910 333
VI. The Far East: 1596-1910 348

BOOK XVI

VICTORIAN BRITAIN: 1832-99

I. The Workshop of the World 373
II. The Nation and the Empire 399

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

Book XII

THE AMERICAN TROPICS: 1527-1900

CHAPTER I

ENGLAND IN SOUTH AMERICA: 1527-1900[1]

The threefold incentive of trade, religion, and adventure has carried the English people round the world, and planted them permanently in possession of some of its fairest and most fertile provinces. From Ralegh's love of adventure and the Puritans' zeal for religion sprang old Virginia and New England, the first of those North American colonies that two centuries' growth changed into the United States. From the fur-traders, explorers, and evangelists of a higher north sprang the colonies that grew into the Dominion of Canada. And from the great seamen who traversed the southern seas

---

[1] The early English voyages to South America are described in Hakluyt and Purchas. The scanty records of British Honduras include Henderson's *Account of the British Settlement of Honduras*, a history that reaches the beginning of the nineteenth century; and A. R. Gibbs's *British Honduras* to 1883. The *Journey across the Undiscovered Portion of British Honduras* adds considerably to our knowledge of the interior. For the Mosquito Coast, Strangeway's *Sketch of the Mosquito Shore* and S. A. Bard's *Adventures*; and principally the official *Correspondence relating to the Mosquito Territories*, laid before Parliament, 3rd July 1848.

British Guiana has a larger literature. Ralegh's *Voyages* and the various biographies of him record the first English attempt on Guiana; its history under Dutch, French and British rule has been carefully traced by Rodway and Dalton, the former reaching to 1894, the latter only to 1850. Rodway contains more colonial plain-speaking, Dalton more general and statistical information. See also *The Capitulation of* in the early years of George III. sprang indirectly the colonisation and Commonwealth of Australia, and the younger Dominion of New Zealand. Three new nations thus sprang from the threefold force of trade, religion, and adventure in the temperate zones of the earth ; and a fourth was in course of rising from South African soil.

Ephemeral Character of Early Tropical Settlements.

The same threefold force drew Britons to the tropics ; but here was no permanent settlement of England, here no new nations were born to that fertile mother of new nations. The white man came and trafficked in slaves or gold, in alcohol or sugar ; he preached in the name of Christ and a common humanity, and slavery vanished ; he explored, and found or lost an El Dorado ; he planted and reaped in those luxuriant regions, and returned home—for in the tropics he made no permanent home—after many years.

But no children were born to these children of Britain ; and in that fact lay the fundamental difference between the work of England in torrid and in temperate zones. For the white man could not propagate his kind in tropic lands, and therefore his work was evanescent and episodic, his settlements were transitory and ephemeral ; and if they yielded him their wealth without stint, they took their heavy toll of life in exchange. The white man's tropic settlements

---

British Guiana, by N. Darnell Davis, whose wide knowledge of that country and of the West Indies has been shown in several monographs, and whose generous interest and assistance in my work I most gratefully acknowledge ; Martin's *British Guiana* ; Sandbach's *Pamphlet on the Present State of British Guiana* ; Ritchie's *First Thirty Years of Schools*, in *Timehri*, the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society of British Guiana.* The health of this colony and of Honduras is discussed in bk. xiv. ch. iv.

The pamphlets mentioned in the text relating to the South Sea Bubble are catalogued in *Rariora*, a most valuable collection of curiosities in the possession of J. E. Hodgkin ; there is a good bibliography of the subject in the *Cambridge Modern History.*

For the British in the Argentine, see the *War Office Correspondence* of 1807, under the heads Buenos Ayres and Montevideo ; also the *Trial of General Whitelocke*, 1808. See also Mulhall's *English in South America.*

were ephemeral; for when adventure called elsewhither the station languished; when trade and traffic passed the settlers likewise left; and when the new religion failed, as it sometimes did, to oust a barbarous or elder predecessor, the missionary followed the adventurer and trader to more promising fields.

A childless colony is a living death; it is a plant that can only propagate itself by continual cuttings from the parent tree; and while its doom may be long delayed, it is nevertheless certainly doomed if it cannot acclimatise itself to the alien soil, and bear of its own volition. And although the limitless energies of Britain have stretched across the tropic lands of three continents, each of those settlements where all else in nature is so fruitful has been a childless colony, always a consumer, never a creator, of life.

The earliest records of the English people in the tropics are typical of the fragmentary and episodic character of their work in those regions as a whole; the detached and broken annals of the British in South America contain more failure than success, more disappointed hopes than profitable enterprise, more death than life.

But when first the English mariners burst into the southern seas they hoped, and not without good reason, for victory and booty. They saw the riches of the Spaniards, and coveted their wealth. They fought valiantly and unscrupulously against the mighty but decaying power of that great empire, burning, plundering, and slaying where they might, risking the terrors of the Inquisition, and defying the severe commercial laws which branded them as smugglers and pirates. If they failed, they failed brilliantly, recklessly, as became men who paid with their lives for the stake they flung; but nevertheless they failed.

It is probable that the first Englishmen who visited South America were the unnamed adventurers who sailed, according to Hakluyt, 'to the River of Plate in the company of

Sebastian Cabota,1527.' Nothing survives of their voyage; but three years later Captain William Hawkins of Plymouth was trading in Brazil, and from that time there were many attempts to reach the southern seas. The indefatigable Hakluyt gives a catalogue of 'divers English voyages, some intended and some performed,' to sub-equatorial waters; among these we notice the great expedition of Drake in 1577, and others which added little to our knowledge and less to our fame.

Early South American Voyages, 1527-77.

But Sir Walter Ralegh was the true pioneer of England in South America, and his failure there was but the first of many disasters that befell his countrymen in that continent. Virginia had already disappointed and impoverished him; but the gallant adventurer still hoped for better fortune further south.

On Thursday, 6th February 1595, Ralegh left England for Guiana in the expectation of finding the wealth that had so long eluded him. He was not altogether denied; for if he brought back no gold, he at least brought back the report of its existence. On his return home a few months later, he related to his astonished hearers the discovery of a 'large, rich, and beautiful empire, with the great golden citie of Manoa, which the Spaniards call El Dorado.' That land, he wrote, had 'more quantitie of gold by manifold than the best parts of the Indies or Peru; it had more great cities than ever Peru had when it flourished most; it was the most beautiful country that ever mine eyes beheld.' Watered by mighty rushing streams, healthy of climate, and rich in diamonds as well as gold, Guiana was already claimed by Ralegh for England: 'This empire,' he said, 'is reserved for Her Majesty [Elizabeth] and the English nation, by reason of the hard success which the Spaniards found in attempting the same. All the most of the kings of the borders were already become Her Majesty's vassals, and seemed to desire nothing more than Her Majesty's protection.'

Sir Walter Ralegh and El Dorado, 1595-1618.

It was an age of marvels, and so many discoveries had been made, 'more divine than human,' in the words of an old writer, that Ralegh's golden city of Manoa obtained easy credence. The poet Spenser believed his friend, and urged England to conquer 'rich Oranoaky,' and that neighbouring land where the strange female realm of the Amazons was supposed to lie; others, too, hoped to share with Ralegh in the wealth of Guiana,[1] and either joined his venture or promoted independent schemes for the conquest of the South American tropics.

A second voyage thither was made in 1596, under Captain Laurens Keymis, who, though he found no gold, reported that 'whole stores of fruitful rich grounds, lying now waste for want of people, do prostitute themselves unto us, like a fair and beautiful woman in the pride and flower of desired grace.'

Further enterprises were now undertaken: in 1604 some forty-six people sailed for Guiana under Captain Charles Leigh in the *Olive Plant*; but several died soon after arrival, and when Leigh himself succumbed, the settlement which had been formed on the coast was given up. The next year another expedition left England for South America, but was driven by stress of weather to Barbados and St. Lucia, where the emigrants were nearly all murdered by the natives.

---

[1] See bk. i. chs. v. and vi. of this work for Spenser's interest in Guiana and Ralegh's expedition to Virginia.

As to the question of El Dorado and the Amazons there have been endless speculations; the most ingenious theory I have seen is by Richard Spruce, author of the *Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and the Andes*. Referring to the Amazons, he remarks that 'the traditions must have had some foundation in fact, and they appear inseparably connected with the traditions of El Dorado. I think I have read nearly all that has been written about the Gilded King and his city and country; and comparing it with my own South American experience, I can hardly doubt that that country was Peru—possibly combined (or confused) with Mexico. The lake called the Mansion of the Sun, because the sun sank into it, is plainly the Pacific Ocean; but some accounts seem to point to Lake Titicaca, and others to the lakes of Mexico; probably the general notion was made up of all these. Most Indian nations call the ocean and a lake, and in some cases even a river, by one and the same name.' The Spaniards and the early English explorers, who emphatically believed these traditions, may easily be vindicated from the charge of credulity which a later and more prosaic age brought against them. What was the discovery of a gilded king or of a nation of women warriors compared with the discovery of a new world? Yet the latter was before their eyes—and who can wonder if they believed without much difficulty the legends which willing natives poured into their ears? The confirmed sceptics of to-day would have become a devout believer in Mother Shipton's marvels in such circumstances.

Yet hope was still not abandoned. In 1606 thirty people sailed under Captain Edward Hartley in the *Sea Phœnix*, but failed utterly; three years later another party left for Guiana under Robert Harcourt, a landed gentleman of England, who had been fired by Ralegh's example. Harcourt himself returned safely, and lived to promote a second South American enterprise several years afterwards; but those he left to found a colony on the Oyapoco River had little profit for their pains.

Many, indeed, had now failed, but Ralegh himself had not lost faith. 'His errors,' he admitted, 'were great,' and had 'yielded very grievous effects'; yet in the 'winter of my life,' he wrote, 'I did undertake these travels, fitted for bodies less blasted with misfortunes, for men of greater abilitie, and for minds of better incouragement.' And in 1617, after his unjust imprisonment by James I. in the Tower of London, he headed a last expedition to the supposed land of gold.

For a time matters seemed to prosper. 'To tell you I might be here king of the Indians,' wrote Ralegh to his wife, 'were a vanity; but my name hath still lived among them.' But disasters quickly crowded upon the hapless knight. His own son, and many of his men fell in a fight with the Spaniards; Keymis destroyed himself; and the mortality by sickness among the men was terrible. His hopes thus completely blasted, Ralegh returned 'a withered beggar' to England, the weary fighter with a tumultuous world now vainly seeking the quiet which was denied him. 'Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall,' he had written in the days of early ambition; and since he had both climbed high and fallen low, peace was now his wish.

'Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,'

cried Ralegh in *The Pilgrimage*. But peace as well as fortune had deserted him when he wrote :—

'Tell fortune of her blindness ;
Tell nature of decay ;
Tell friendship of unkindness ;
Tell justice of delay,
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.'

Ralegh was again confined to the Tower of London, whence he only emerged to die. 'You shall receive, dear wief,' he sent word as he was condemned, 'my last words in these my last lynes. My love I send you, that you may keep it when I am dead ; and my councell that you may remember it when I am noe more. I would not with my last will present you with sorrowes, deare Bess. Lett them goe to the grave with [me], and be buried in the dust.' A disillusioned and broken man, who had drained life's cup to the dregs, he bade farewell to the world in some verses written in his Bible :—

'Even such is time that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust ;
Who, in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days :
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.'

The day after his condemnation, on 29th October 1618, Ralegh was executed, saying, as he felt the axe : 'This gives me no fear. It is a sharp medicine to cure me of all my diseases.'

Thus died worthily the last of the great Elizabethans, and one of the first of England's oversea pioneers ; thus ended unworthily the first period of English enterprise in South America.

In one of the many curious passages of his writings, Ralegh had once attempted to explain a puzzling contradiction of the human brain. 'The mind of man hath two parts: the one always frequented by the entrance of manifold vanities, the other desolate and overgrown with grass, by which enter our charitable thoughts and divine contemplations.' The search for the golden land was one of the magnificent but manifold vanities of the age; the 'Empire of Guiana' was inhabited only by savage Caribs, who had resisted the Spanish braves; the city of Manoa was a figment of Ralegh's brain, similar to that strange tale, which others had brought back from Guiana, of headless men whose mouths grew in their breasts.

And Guiana was now deserted by England; for when that land of fable and disappointment was mentioned among the Puritan refugees in Holland as a possible home for their congregations in the new world, they rejected it for the more sombre but far less dangerous shores of New England.[1] They sought no earthly riches, but a heavenly crown; and whatever their celestial reward, in doing so they unwittingly chose the path of mundane wisdom. Within a few years Massachusetts was prosperous, while Guiana remained deserted save for a few Spanish and Dutch merchants, and the visit of an occasional buccaneer.

The South Sea Bubble, 1720.

With the death of Ralegh all active attempts on the part of England to conquer Guiana came to an end; yet the vain hopes which his expeditions thither had inspired continued to move his countrymen. Efforts were still made from time to time to establish trading-stations along that part of the South American coast; but one by one these ended in failure and loss. The legend of the wealth of Guiana, however, was persistently believed, in spite of every disaster; and that legend, which attributed enormous wealth to every part of South America, was in some measure responsible for the South Sea Bubble of 1720.

---

[1] See vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii.

The history of the South Sea Bubble belongs to insular British rather than imperial annals; but that mad fever of gambling shows that the elusive expectation of riches in the south was still strong enough, a century after Ralegh's death, to tempt the English people from their customary financial prudence.

The nation paid dearly for its temporary aberration when the bubble of speculation burst: fortunes were lost in the crisis, and the credit of the Government itself was severely shaken. The extravagant ideas of the wealth of South America thus failed a second time.[1]

British Honduras, 1662.

It was the fate of Guiana to remain for many years longer a land of unrealised hopes and vain delusions; but elsewhere in torrid America the British had already gained a precarious footing, from which they were not to be dislodged.

The first actual settlement of the English people in the western tropics was formed by freebooters on the coast of the Carib Sea. The surrounding Spanish territories were rich in valuable dyewoods and mahoganies; and there, where the streams flow down through a swampy jungle into the shallow waters from which Honduras takes its name, some English soldiers of fortune in the West Indies began to ply their trade of log-cutters shortly after the conquest of Jamaica in 1655.

A few British sailors, who were wrecked off Yucatan, had settled on that coast in 1638; four years afterwards the island of Ruatan or Rattan was captured and temporarily occupied; twenty years later, in 1662, the first permanent colony was established in the district now known as British Honduras. The place soon possessed several hundred traders all mainly engaged in cutting down and exporting its rich timber to England.

---

[1] Those who were victimised obtained little popular sympathy. Pamphlets were published, full of gibes at the ruined speculators, among which we may note *The Bubbler's Mirror, or England's Folly*, while 'Bubble' playing cards became the fashion, inscribed with doggerel such as:—

> 'The headlong fools plunge into South Sea Water,
> But the sly Longheads wade with caution a'ter;
> The First are drowning, but the Wiser last,
> Venture no deeper than the Knees or Waist.'

A Buccaneer Colony.

They were not a very reputable folk; and they sometimes varied the monotony of their forbidden industry by plundering the rightful owners of the soil. But although attacked in return and occasionally worsted—260 prisoners were carried off by the Spaniards in 1675 to work in the Mexican mines—they could not be dislodged; and as the years passed a straggling British settlement grew up at the place, unrecognised by either its own or the Spanish Government.

Belize, the future capital of British Honduras, was said to derive its very name, as it did its existence, from the buccaneers. A balize or beacon was erected there to guide them through the dangerous islet-studded coral sea,[1] and in truth the city—which in the eighteenth century consisted only 'of a few wretched huts in the middle of a miserable swamp'—saw far more of the swaggering, reckless filibuster in its earlier days than of the peaceful trader.

But permanently profitable industry can only be carried on by regular methods. A few merchants, of less doubtful antecedents than the earlier settlers, gradually engrossed most of the business into their hands; and despite affrays with the Spaniards, the uncertain nature of their tenure, and the constantly fluctuating price of wood, which varied from £40 to £16 a ton as the fashion for mahogany furniture increased or declined, the trade grew larger.

---

[1] Another derivation makes Belize a corruption of Wallace, a noted Scottish buccaneer who haunted the place in its early days. In neither case can the city dispute the bar sinister on its philologic shield.

African slaves were now imported to fell the logs; and in the four years from 1713 to 1716 there were exported 14,995 tons of timber. The settlement became less lawless, and, since its existence was still ignored by the British Government, seven magistrates were elected to rule by the inhabitants themselves.

Ignored in England till 1763.

At length, in 1763, the Peace of Paris gave British Honduras a more definite political standing. The colony was henceforth known as 'His Majesty's settlement in the Bay of Honduras,' but the suzerainty of Spain was still acknowledged. It was agreed that all the fortifications which English subjects had erected should be demolished; but 'they or their workmen were not to be disturbed or molested, under any pretext whatever, in their said places of cutting and loading logwood; and for this purpose they might build without hindrance and occupy without interruption the houses and magazines necessary for their families and effects.'

The people, however, had vitality enough to encroach on their jealous neighbours; and this aroused so much resentment that, on 15th September, 1779, the colony was attacked and practically exterminated by the Spaniards. Most of the inhabitants were deported to Havana and imprisoned there; the majority died in captivity. The few who survived returned undaunted to British Honduras when the Treaty of Versailles brought peace in 1783; and they were strong enough to beat off another attack by Spain thirteen years later. From that time the colony entered upon a period of quiet prosperity, its remote and insignificant character protecting it from the great European wars of the age.

A check was given to its advance when the planters were compelled gradually to manumit their slaves in obedience to the Imperial Law of 1833; but some compensation was afforded by the new industry of sugar-cane cultivation, which Spanish immigrants introduced in 1847.

In time Belize grew into a clean and fairly healthy town, with substantial houses for its wealthier merchants. The first Protestant church was built in 1812—the old freebooters were more concerned with earthly spoils than heavenly treasure—and the colony was subsequently united, so far as concerned its religious affairs, with the Anglican diocese of Jamaica.

Character of the Colony.

But despite the influence thus brought to bear, British Honduras retained, and, perhaps, still retains, many of the old irregularities, which use has hardened into customs. The buccaneers were not remarkable either for sobriety or chastity, and their manners were more forcible than refined; their descendants of to-day are said to be addicted both to immorality and drink, while crimes of violence are not uncommon.[1] There is little education or culture in the colony, and so long as the richer merchants look on Belize as a place of exile, and generally leave after some years to end their days in England, matters in this respect are hardly likely to improve. In 1812 the population consisted of 1098 free men and 2540 slaves; by the census of 1905 it was 40,372 in all.

Though British Honduras differs from most other English colonies in origin and character, it has yet possessed sufficient likeness to England for its annals to enshrine a constitutional struggle in miniature.

Its Government.

The system of elected magistrates, which had grown up naturally in the settlement, was so successful that two commissioners, who were sent out by the Imperial Government in 1741, left the administration as they found it. In 1765 Vice-Admiral Sir William Burnaby, assisted by Captain Cook, the explorer, drew up a code which was afterwards regarded as the charter of liberty for the colony, and when disagreements occurred with the Lieutenant-Governor in later years, 'Burnaby's Code' was always invoked to settle the dispute. In 1840 the Imperial Government declared that 'the law of England is and shall be the law of this settlement'; seven years previously the elected magistracy had been abolished for nominees of the crown, and a long struggle supervened, which did not terminate when, in 1853, a constitutional executive was appointed, consisting of a Superintendent and a Legislative Council of eighteen elected, and three nominated members, with an Executive Council of six to assist the Superintendent. In 1870, however, this constitution was withdrawn, and British Honduras was proclaimed a Crown Colony.

---

[1] I need not comment on the fact that the illegitimate birth-rate of the colony in 1905 was 44·90 per cent. of the total number of births. In other parts of the world it varies between 2·65 in Ireland and 14·73 in Austria: the latter is quite exceptionally high. But in some of the West Indian islands the rate is considerably higher than even that of British Honduras.

Altogether, it was not without good grounds for his disgust that a British sailor once described the colony as one of the most benighted spots on the face of the earth.—*Reminiscences of Admiral Montagu.*

The Mosquito Coast Failure, 1740-1820.

Thus the old pirate settlement grew into a permanent and legitimate appanage of empire; but its miserable offshoot on the pestilent Mosquito Coast failed as absolutely as the abortive Scottish experiment lower down on the isthmus of Darien or Panama.[1] A few planters and traders attempted to found a colony in 1740 among the unsubdued natives of the Mosquito district; but since their efforts were unsuccessful, they were disavowed by the British Government and the place was given up.

Forty years later, however, in 1779, some refugees from Belize again came thither when the older colony fell before the Spaniards; but the Treaty of 1783 required them to evacuate the territory, and they returned to British Honduras. Notwithstanding this rebuff, the scheme was not allowed to die; in 1820 another settlement was attempted, and the farcical ceremony of crowning a native king took place.

But the whole establishment was utterly mismanaged. Within a few months it was abandoned, and the project was never revived; and in 1859 England finally gave up all pretensions to the Mosquito Coast, or, indeed, to any part of Central America beyond British Honduras.

---

[1] For the Darien failure, see vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii.

British Guiana, 1804.

The one permanent English settlement in South America was British Guiana; but Ralegh's dreams of conquest in that district were only fulfilled, and then only in very modified form, some two centuries after his death. Isolated efforts had often again been made to establish a colony on the Orinoco; but continued misfortune seemed to pursue every attempt. In 1626 an expedition to Guiana under a Captain Marshall failed; the following year another project put forward by Robert Harcourt to found a 'Company of Adventurers to the River Amazon' came to grief, and nearly ruined its promoter;[1] in 1652 a trading-station was founded at Paramaribo, but seventeen years later was exchanged with Holland; and though the Dutch were now successful merchants in Guiana, every English descent upon that coast came to naught.

Not until 1738, when the Dutch province of Essequibo was opened to all nations, did the first English planters from the West Indies settle in Guiana; but while they prospered, they lived under an alien flag. In 1781 the Three Rivers district was captured by the British, under the plea that the Dutch were engaged in illicit trade with the United States; but after a few months we were ousted in turn by the French. When war again broke out, a British fleet appeared at the mouth of the Orinoco in 1795, but left without venturing an action. The following year, however, Guiana surrendered to Sir Ralph Abercromby. Restored at the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, it was recaptured in 1804, and since that time has remained in British hands, being purchased from the Dutch at the general peace ten years afterwards for three millions sterling.

---

[1] Harcourt himself appears to have died in Guiana about this time, contrary to the statement in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that he died in England in 1631. The following letter from his son, dated 1632, to Sir Henry Spelman, leaves little doubt on the question.—'Worthy Sir,—It will much concern my brother, Sir Simon Harcourt, at a trial which he shall have shortly at Stafford Sizes to make good proof of my father's death in Guiana. We have already to that purpose Captain King his oath, who was there at ye time of his death, but to strengthen that proofe, our request to you is that you would be pleased to certifie under your hands . . . what yourselfe and the Companie have heard and old friends believe concerning his death. . . .—Your Servant, FR. HARCOURT.'—*Tanner MSS.* lxxi. 154, Bodleian.

Its acquisition in this manner excited some adverse comment in England, the Lord Lansdowne of the day declaring, in 1816, that it would have been far wiser to pay three millions to be rid of a colony which only produced sugar it could not consume, and withdrew capital that England could not afford. His remarks were due to ignorance; the Dutch settlers had long prospered in what was now British Guiana, and its new owners were equally successful.

Sugar, rum, molasses, cotton, and coffee were the staple crops of the district, and many fortunes were made by the planters, while newcomers reclaimed the untrodden morasses of the interior, and established fresh estates. The first thirty years of the nineteenth century, in fact, were the golden age of material prosperity for the colony.

Apart from the possibility of speedy wealth, however, life in British Guiana left something to be desired. Few of the planters made the place their home; most returned to England or Holland after some years with a competence, either selling their estates outright, or appointing a resident agent and settling down to the easy career of an absentee proprietor.

Society in the colony was therefore rough and careless in the absence of permanently established families; a copious if primitive hospitality prevailed, but drunkenness and duelling were constantly in evidence. There were few white women in British Guiana; but the planters, who dispensed with wives of their own colour, consoled themselves with a mistress or a harem of negresses or mulatos. A colonial writer of a later generation, when more orthodox manners had begun to prevail, laughingly compared the older estate-owners to the denizens of heaven, in that they neither married nor gave in marriage; but their mixed offspring, who inherited most of the vices and few of the virtues of both races, seldom bore any oppressive resemblance to the angels.

Its Misfortunes.

But if manners slowly improved in later years, the trade of British Guiana received blow after blow as the slave emancipators gained strength in England. The industrial basis of the colony, under Dutch and English alike, had always lain in the cultivation of the estates by slave labour. But after 1807 the abolition of the slave trade put an end to the supply of fresh labour from Africa, and the planters were now compelled to undertake the more costly process of rearing the children born to their own slaves.[1]

In the same year the first missionaries of the London Missionary Society arrived in the colony, with the laudable object of spreading Christianity among the negroes—a matter in which the planters had been indifferent, if not actively hostile. But the labours of the missionaries were sometimes more zealous than discreet. It was easier to make the negroes discontented than to make them Christians; and a negro rising in 1823 was ascribed to missionary propaganda, aided by the anti-slavery resolutions which had been passed in the Imperial Parliament a few months previously. The insurrection itself was crushed in a few days; but its occurrence did not make the missionaries more popular. They were bitterly compared to puff-adders, and described as 'sleek-headed Philistines': the missionary who had been the immediate cause of the revolt was tried, convicted, and condemned to death. The sentence, however, was not carried out.[2]

---

[1] The whole subject of slavery is discussed in bk. xiii. ch. iii.

[2] It is often extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to arrive at the exact truth from the passionate distortions and prejudices on either side in the struggle between the planters and the missionaries. Neither could, or would, see any good in the other; both ascribed every evil to the agency of their opponents. Some additional examples and particulars are instanced in the following chapters.

But a far worse menace to the prosperity of British Guiana followed within a few years. In August, 1833, the Slave Emancipation Bill passed the Imperial Parliament. The planters had long protested that they would be ruined if their slaves were liberated, that freed negroes would not work voluntarily on the estates, and that the area under cutivation must, therefore, diminish.

There was unfortunately much truth in the prediction. Once freed, the negroes only laboured intermittently, and in some places refused to work at all. Many disturbances took place, which were not quelled until the ring-leaders had been hanged. The crops diminished and profits fell.

In some cases, it is true, machinery was employed to compensate for the loss of slave labour, and it was indeed fortunate for the planters that the era of emancipation coincided almost exactly with the date of the great discoveries in applied mechanics, which dispensed in some degree with manual labour. Already in 1805 the first steam sugar-mill had been introduced into the colony, and machinery was now increasingly used on the estates with good effect.

But before British Guiana had recovered from the industrial depression consequent on the social change, a crowning disaster fell upon the colony. The British Sugar Act of 1846 withdrew the protection which had always been given to the chief product of Guiana in its best market; the inevitable result was an immediate, steady, and continuous fall in the area of the sugar-fields under cultivation in the tropic settlements, and in the price of the commodity itself.

In any case, the rapid spread of the sugar-beet industry in Europe would soon have imposed a severe handicap on the planters of British Guiana and the West Indies; but Emancipation and Free Trade together almost ruined colonies which had been built up on Slavery and Protection. A melancholy picture of the decline of British Guiana is given in a report of 1849. In 1829 there had been raised 103,898,617 lbs. of sugar; twenty years later the total crop had sunk to 60,811,854 lbs. Coffee had fallen from 9,230,486 lbs. to 91,056 lbs.;[1] and cotton, of which 1,596,171 lbs. had been raised in 1829, had gone out of cultivation altogether since 1843.

Many districts which had formerly flourished were now deserted; the roads were almost impassable; magnificent estates were 'pestilent swamps, overrun with bush, and productive of malignant fevers'; some buildings were crumbling into dust, and others which had been abandoned were invaded by hordes of lawless squatters. Drainage was neglected, with the inevitable result that diseases spread, and whole provinces relapsed into wilderness; the planters were either impoverished or had left the country in despair; and the negroes 'spent their time either in contented idleness or rioting,' supporting life by fishing and shooting, or, in many cases, relapsing altogether into a savage state.

A Gradual Improvement.

From that unhappy condition the colony has slowly recovered. A few small industries were introduced, to compensate for the decline of the staple products; and the estate owner, who had formerly waxed fat on the proceeds of sugar and cotton, now eked out a precarious existence by cultivating firewood, charcoal, and timber.

The loss of the old slave labour was compensated in part by the importation of Chinese and East Indian kulis under indentures, and some revival took place in consequence on the sugar estates.

But of more importance than this was the fact that the old and long-discredited dream of Ralegh was at last destined to be fulfilled. The magnificent reports which he had brought home, of the existence of gold and precious stones in 'the Empire of Guiana,' had been the cause of many a British disaster; but they now proved to contain a substantial basis of truth. Mining operations were begun in British Guiana in the year 1886, and within a decade gold to the value of £2,796,300 was obtained, while the yield increased in the following years. Diamonds, too, were now exported, and though both the metal and the stones of Guiana were limited in comparison with the output in South Africa during the same period, they had a considerable effect in improving the fortunes of the colony.

---

[1] Coffee had been introduced into England about 1553, and it proved so popular that the coffee-house quickly became a national institution. Eight years afterwards a pamphlet was published, in which the new custom was unreservedly condemned. 'Here men carried by instinct sipp muddy water and like frogs confusedly murmur insignificant notes, which tickle their own ears, and to their inharmonious sense make music of jarring string.'

It was not unreasonable that fresh hopes should spring up in a country which was able to show such evident signs of advance, and there is good ground to believe that the worst period of depression is over. The population of British Guiana in 1891 was 278,328, of whom, however, not more than 16,724 were Europeans. The government followed the usual type of Crown Colony administration.

The Argentine, 1805-7.

The miserable episode of the Argentine expeditions in the early nineteenth century brought to a close the several attempts made by Britain to establish her power in South America.

In the course of the Napoleonic wars, many isolated attacks were made by England on various countries in different parts of the world. The acquisition of Cape Colony and Ceylon may be reckoned among the successes attributable to a policy of very dubious wisdom; but the Walcheren and Argentine campaigns were costly failures.

The city of Buenos Ayres had been seized by a British force in 1805, but surrendered to the Spanish authorities shortly afterwards; yet the British Government believed that the people of the country would welcome and support a second invading army. A large expedition of 11,000 men was therefore sent out from England to the Argentine early in

1807, under the command of General Whitelocke, a soldier who had gained some experience of war and such military reputation as he possessed in the West Indian campaigns of the time.[1]

The reception of this force in South America was not flattering, and it soon became evident that the British had gravely miscalculated their popularity in the Spanish colonies. But much might, nevertheless, have been accomplished with so large an invading army had it not been for the gross incapacity of Whitelocke.

The English troops appeared before Buenos Ayres on 2nd July. The town was not fortified, but the streets were barricaded; three days later the attack was made. The first of the English battalions, to the number of 1,676 men, was compelled to surrender, and that reverse was the beginning and the end of the expedition. No further assault was delivered by Whitelocke, and when the Spaniards proposed that he should abandon the campaign, the craven leader promptly accepted the terms and retreated.

A storm of indignation at once arose in England; public opinion rightly condemned General Whitelocke as either a coward or a traitor, or both; the men he had led, who were equally disgusted at his pusillanimity, drank 'success to grey hairs, but bad luck to White Locks'; but it was too late. Whitelocke was court-martialled, condemned, and dismissed the service which he had disgraced; but there was no further invasion of the Argentine.

The Later Failures.

Henceforth the British Government recognised its failure in South America; the few petty settlements which were subsequently attempted by individual pioneers on that continent have been too unimportant or too unsuccessful to merit any detailed notice.

A small British colony was founded at Rosario some years later; but the emigrants are said to have been 'unsteady, fresh from school and college and regiment, without any practical knowledge of anything. They arrived at Rosario in a batch, and considerably astonished the natives by their manners and customs. Drinking, gambling, and racing was the order of the day; the capital they had brought with them took unto itself wings; the natives smiled at the ways of the mad Englishmen,' and bankruptcy soon caused the abandonment of the enterprise.[1]

---

[1] His West Indian campaigns are described by Bryan Edwards, *History of the West Indies.*

A small Welsh colony was established in 1865 at Port Madryn in the Southern Argentine. The people were active, industrious, and successful; but their numbers were too limited for the settlement permanently to maintain its original character, and the district is now chiefly inhabited by Italians.

A Communist Colony.

Another English colony in South America was founded on communistic principles by William Lane, an Australian Socialist, in the later years of the nineteenth century. Those who joined him in Paraguay bound themselves to hold their lands, to share their profits, and even to maintain their children, in common. The settlement was to become a modern Utopia, a land in which 'the individuality of every member was to be held inviolable in thought, religion, speech, and leisure, and in all matters where the individuality of others was not affected.' Such were the leading principles of New Australia in Paraguay; but the reality fell pitiably short of the ideal.

Most of the settlers would have died of starvation had they not been assisted by the Government of Paraguay; nearly all were forced to return to Australia, disillusioned and disappointed men. Only a few ruined huts and straggling trees remained to mark the spot where the scheme had been tried and speedily discovered to be unworkable.[2]

---

[1] E. F. Knight's *The Cruise of the Falcon.*

[2] A. St. Ledger's *Australian Socialism*, and Stewart Graham's *New Australia.* Communism had also been tried in early New England by the Pilgrim Fathers, and speedily abandoned. See vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii.

Thus the English people failed in South America, and the cause of their failure was simple. It was not that they were unfitted to develop the tropical lands of the earth, for their history in Asia and Africa has disproved that theory. It was not that they could not combat the Spaniards and Portuguese, who were already in possession of those countries, for they ousted them elsewhere.

The English Failure in South America.

It was the fact that no organised and systematic effort was ever made to conquer or colonise South America which led to failure. The English enterprises on that continent were a series of spasmodic episodes, by which individuals sometimes prospered, but from which the nation as a whole gained little profit, less territory, and no renown; and although many a British merchant has amassed a fortune in South American trade, although British capital has been largely invested in the development of the railways and other industries of the continent, there has never been any successful settlement of the English people there outside the one colony of British Guiana.[1]

Its Cause.

South America, in short, is the one considerable portion of the outer world where the Latin race has maintained itself against the English; and the Latins have maintained their preponderance for this reason, and for this reason only, that they have systematically colonised that continent, whereas their rivals have done nothing save organise isolated and disconnected raids and settlements, which, when they failed, failed completely, and when they succeeded, were on too small a scale to exercise any real influence.

---

[1] No attempt was ever made to found an English settlement on the western side of the continent, in Chile or Peru. Indeed, except for the voyages of Drake and Anson, the British flag was almost unknown in the Pacific until the time of Captain Cook. For the English in the Pacific, see vol. v. bk. xx.

CHAPTER II

THE WEST INDIES: 1805-1900[1]

ACCORDING to English opinion at the close of the eighteenth century, the West Indian planter was the happiest and most fortunate of men. His life was passed in a delightful if

---

[1] Authorities.—The early annals of Jamaica are in Lang's *History* (to the year 1774); Bryan Edwards, *History of the West Indies*; and G. W. Bridges, *Annals of Jamaica*, strongly advocating the planter interest. Gardner's *History of Jamaica* is full and fairly impartial. For the Eyre controversy, in which the evidence is voluminous and often contradictory, primarily the report of the Royal Commission; Hamilton Hume's *Life of Governor Eyre*, a fervent appreciation; and Finlason's *Jamaica Case*, an able legal study. Also Underhill's *Condition of Jamaica* and Harvey and Brown's *Jamaica in* 1866, both partial to the negroes. Bleby's *Reign of Terror* is a violent tirade against the whites. There is an interesting obituary notice of Eyre in the *Cornhill Magazine* by J. B. Atlay. For the Kingston earthquake of 1907, Ralph Hall Caine's *Cruise of the Port Kingston*, prejudiced and hastily written; and the far more useful accounts in the London *Times*.

The social condition of pre-emancipation Jamaica may be studied in Williams's *Tour*, in the *Memoir of William Knibb*, and T. H. Milner's *Present and Future State of Jamaica*. W. P. Livingstone's *Black Jamaica* is a useful and sympathetic, but not very impartial, work. An account of the cholera epidemic will be found in Dr. Parkin's *Report on Cholera in Jamaica*.

For Trinidad, Lionel Fraser's *History* (to 1839); the *Present Condition of Trinidad* by W. H. Burnley, 1842, which contains much valuable evidence; *Trinidadiana, or Annals of the Island*; and De Verteuil's *Trinidad*. Tobago has been singularly fortunate in its historian, Chief-Justice H. J. Woodcock. Grenada is described by Septimus Wells; for the insurrection, see the anonymous *Letter from a Grenada Planter*, lengthy but useful. The annals of Antigua have been fully written by Langford and Oliver.

St. Lucia is fully treated by H. H. Breen; Dominica in a slight monograph by F. Sterns-Fadelle, Atwood's *History*, and Grieve's *Island of Dominica*. *Letters from the Virgin Islands* (anonymous) contain a moderately interesting account of those islands; for the Bahamas, see the exhaustive study undertaken by the Johns Hopkins University (U.S.A.) in 1905. The buccaneers, to whom reference is occasionally made, may be studied in Esquemeling's *Buccaneers of America*.

The annual reports published by the Colonial Office are invaluable for recent years; and the great Report of the Royal Commission on the West Indies in 1897 is essential. The files of the West Indian newspapers at the Royal Colonial Institute and in the British Museum are also useful. I have particularly to thank Mr. N. Darnell Davis, of treacherous and often dangerous climate, and amid beautiful scenery. He grew rich without any serious personal exertions; and his wealth was secure, since it depended on a regular British demand for his products, which were protected by a tariff against foreign competition. If wars frequently harassed the West Indies, they did not often harm the planter, for estates were seldom confiscated by conquerors, and cargoes could be insured, while the purchaser paid at least part of the extra cost of freight in troublous times.[1]

There was much truth in the picture, apart from the serious drawback that the negroes sometimes rebelled, and that their presence rendered constant vigilance necessary. The terrible racial massacres in the island of Hayti, where the French planters had been slaughtered wholesale by the blacks, showed what might happen if the slaves were allowed to get out of hand; the long-continued Maroon Wars of Jamaica proved how difficult it might be to subdue them. But in general the English planters had small reason for alarm, or for discontent with their lot; and when the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 gave the command of the sea to Britain, they looked forward hopefully to a golden age of unchecked prosperity.

For a time the most optimistic were not disappointed. It is true that the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 was no more welcomed in the West Indies than in British Guiana, for it threw upon the planters the task of rearing, instead of buying, their slaves. But profits were still good and life was still easy; the old lavish hospitality prevailed—a visitor to

---

Bridgetown, Barbados, for his kindness in drawing my attention to several points of interest in these journals which might otherwise have escaped my notice.

The whole subject of slavery is discussed at length in bk. xiii. ch. iii.; the health of the West Indies in bk. xiv. ch. iv.

[1] A popular play of the year 1771, *The West Indies*, says of a planter that 'he has rum and sugar enough to make all the water in the Thames into punch.' It was the usual thing for an heiress in eighteenth century light comedy to be described as the daughter of a wealthy planter.

Jamaica, indeed, in 1823 remarked that introductions were hardly necessary, so generous was the welcome given to visitors. And the threatened emancipation of the slaves was for some years no more than a distant thundercloud. The political influence of the West Indian planters in Great Britain was strong, and easily able to organise a powerful opposition to Wilberforce and his friends, who were now agitating for the abolition of slavery; while, if the planters were not always over-scrupulous in their methods of fighting the Abolitionists, the Abolitionists themselves were often guilty of exaggeration and even of gross libels upon the planters. When men whose livelihood is threatened are pitted against those who are burning with a zeal for reform, neither will preserve very rigorously the decorous limits of academic argument.

But the slave-owners were at length vanquished by the slave-emancipators, and, as an immediate consequence of the abolition of slavery in the year 1834, the West Indies were faced with a social and economic crisis. Thirteen years later, when the British sugar-duties which had protected the planters were repealed, the gloom deepened; and it was not dispelled during the remainder of the nineteenth century, for the cultivation of the sugar-beet in Europe, stimulated as it was by the bounties granted by continental governments, almost ruined the sugar-cane industry, and the planters were too conservative in their habits to adapt themselves readily to the changed conditions.

Jamaica, 1805-1909.

In Jamaica, the land of springs, as its native name of Xaymaca signifies, the largest and by far the most important of the British West Indies, both emancipation and the reduction of the sugar-duties were resisted to the last. The proposals of the Abolitionists were denounced by the planters as confiscation, and as an unwarrantable interference with other men's property; both Wilberforce and his allies were assailed with coarse personal abuse. They were described as 'ignorant, infatuated, hypocritical reptiles that were gnawing the vitals of the colonies.' One estate-owner requested a visitor to 'tell your country and those who ruin us that I am a Christian, and I swear by your God we will be revenged'; another refused to buy any more goods from the mother country.

Some professed that they would declare Jamaica independent of British control, and federate the island with the United States. One proprietor had even planned improved roads, new towns, and the introduction of the telegraph when the island was separated from the Empire. Others more reasonably suggested that the Abolitionists, whom they derisively called saints, should observe and remedy the misery in the British Isles, the poverty of the English agricultural labourer, the distress of the crippled but unpensioned old soldier, and the misery of the Irish peasantry, before they intervened on behalf of the West Indian negroes whom they had never seen.[1]

Religious Discord.

The Jamaican allies of the English Abolitionists, the missionaries, who had been sent out from home to convert the slaves to Christianity, were naturally as unpopular as the Abolitionists themselves; and the most determined efforts were made to stop their teaching—the first that the negroes had ever received.

The Church of England had long been established in Jamaica; but, as in Virginia and other southern colonies of the English in America, it was the church of the white man and not of the black. Few, if any, ministrations were given to the slaves: a Jamaican clergyman declared in 1817 that negroes could derive little advantage from the Church, and that not many attended the catechism, being conscious of their defective understanding. The episcopal clergy as a whole made no effort to instruct the slaves; and although greater zeal was displayed in after years, it was only when the ministers of other religious denominations had put their indifference to shame.

---

[1] The taunt was true. The anti-slavery leaders—Wilberforce, Buxton, Pitt, and Fox—had never been in the West Indies; and their ignorance of local affairs sometimes led them into ludicrous mistakes. Wilberforce, for instance, spoke of the aboriginal Caribs as descended from the Africans (see Wilson Bridges, *A Voice from Jamaica*). The negroes often wished to see their deliverer, and once greeted a white traveller as 'Mr. Wilberforce coming to choose a quadroon wife.' It was a popular saying among the planters that if Wilberforce would marry a negress they would believe in the equality of white and black.

Nor was the Church of England in Jamaica efficient even in the limited range of duties to which it restricted itself. Although nominally under the rule of the Bishop of London, that prelate had exercised no authority over the colonial clergy for more than a century, and no bishopric was established in Jamaica until 1824. Thus uncontrolled, the older clergy held peculiar views as to the avocations proper to their sacred office. Many of them, says an old writer, were of 'a character so vile that I do not care to mention it; except a few, they were generally the most finished of all debauchees.' Several were notoriously lewd and drunken gamblers, and their ranks were sometimes recruited from bankrupt merchants, and naval or military officers, whose ministry was as innocent of holiness as of theology. The church-doors were often not opened for months at a time, since divine service depended on the spasmodic energies of the incumbent; peculation was not unknown, and in one case at least property that was left to found a school was attached to the rectory.

Since the episcopal clergy, in common with the planters, had no belief in the capacity of the negro to imbibe the doctrines of Christianity, they naturally abandoned him to spiritual darkness. The first Moravian missionaries, however, who arrived in Jamaica in 1754, began preaching regularly to the blacks; and these were presently followed by representatives of the leading nonconformist sects of England.

But their work was opposed at every turn. They were blamed for every insurrection of the slaves, although there had been many rebellions before their arrival. Sometimes their chapels were mobbed and wrecked, and even the clergy of the Church of England and the magistrates of the island were known to take part in the business of destruction.

One missionary who was found guilty of the heinous crime of singing a hymn after sunset was imprisoned for a month. Another was tarred, and his wife and children ill-treated. An official document in 1828 charged the missionaries with 'preaching and teaching sedition even from the pulpit; and by misrepresentation and falsehood, endeavouring to cast odium upon all the public authorities.'[1] The Legislature had already made determined attempts to hamper them, and on 17th December 1802, had passed 'an Act to prevent preaching by persons not duly qualified by law,' the punishment being any sentence that the law might see fit short of death in the case of a white man, and hard labour or whipping for a negro offender. The Act was promptly disallowed by the Crown; but the prejudice against the missionaries did not lessen, and on occasion the colonial press incited the people to put them to death. 'There are fine hanging woods,' said the Jamaica *Courant* on 6th January 1832, 'and we do sincerely hope that the bodies of all the Methodist preachers who may be convicted of sedition may diversify the scene. Shooting is too honourable a death.'

But despite every hindrance, the missionaries persevered, and thousands of negroes were baptized within a few years. The form of Christianity they professed may indeed have been crude. The mild and beautiful doctrines of the Man of Sorrows were often grotesquely mingled with survivals of the savage superstitions of Africa, with the detestable Obeah worship of the Bantu tribes, and with the licentious traditions of a barbarous race.[1] The religion which taught that every man, regardless of colour, was equal before his Creator, and that white and black alike would share the joys of heaven or the torments of hell, may at times have awakened dangerous thoughts of an earthly equality which could only be attained by rebellion and massacre. But in the main the work of the missionaries was more than justified; and though they could not uproot the pagan traditions of centuries in a few years, though many of their converts were Christians only in name, and rogues or hypocrites at heart, the missionaries yet succeeded in implanting a general if superficial belief in a civilised creed.

---

[1] The evidence upon which this conclusion was based was said to be totally inadequate. Unfortunately, I have been unable to examine it myself.

Slave Emancipation.

As Emancipation drew nearer, however, the planters became still more violent in their opposition. The smaller West Indian islands accepted the abolition of slavery with regret but without delay; Jamaica alone refused to abate one jot or tittle of her privileges. The colonial Legislature obstinately refused to revise the laws relating to the punishment of the slaves; one member even threatened that the king's Orders in Council should be burned in public by the common hangman; the revolt of the colony was predicted, and the people of England were ironically requested to purchase the island themselves, so that they might work out their philanthropic schemes at their own cost. And when Emancipation was finally enforced after a long struggle, the planters having at length given way to the Imperial Parliament, the compensation money of over six millions sterling which was granted them was complained of as inadequate; while the whole policy of Wilberforce was roundly condemned as one that had substituted hypothesis and speculation for history, fact, and experience. It would have been nearer the truth to have said that it substituted an ethical for a commercial conception of humanity.

---

[1] The converts of the Baptist missionaries are said to have been particularly remarkable for their success in grafting West African superstitions upon the austere Protestantism which was preached to them. The Christian missionaries who had converted Europe centuries before had found equal cause to complain of the corruptions introduced by the heathen. See also bk. xiv. ch. i.; and vol. vi. bk. xxv.

A general rising of the blacks was likewise confidently anticipated. But these lugubrious prophecies were not in fact fulfilled, and the day of emancipation, 1st August 1834, passed quietly as a public holiday.

The planters, however, did little to make the future easy either for white or black. They sullenly acquiesced in Emancipation, but they refused to sell land near their estates to the freed negroes, who thereupon obtained small holdings in other districts; they withdrew, perhaps naturally, but none the less ill-advisedly, many small privileges from their negro 'apprentices,' which had been the customary boon of the slaves; and they continued to take pleasure in thwarting the Governor of the island, who was responsible for the administration of the Emancipation Act. The apprenticeship system failed in the end, and was abolished more quickly than had been anticipated, on 1st August 1838. The negroes could do better for themselves when completely independent, and the planters were already looking for other supplies of labour.

In a purely commercial sense, the results of Emancipation were very unfortunate. The exports of sugar and coffee, the two staple products of Jamaica, fell enormously in value;[1] but when Britain turned from Protection to Free

[1] The exact figures are :—

Sugar	1794 to 1800,	average annual crop,	92,306 hhds.
	1800 to 1807,	,, ,,	133,755 ,,
	1808 to 1814,	,, ,,	117,765 ,,
	1815 to 1821,	,, ,,	118,859 ,,
	1822 to 1828,	,, ,,	96,665 ,,
	1829 to 1835,	,, ,,	91,399 ,,
	1836 to 1838,	,, ,,	66,070 ,,
	1839 to 1842,	,, ,,	42,000 ,,
Coffee	1791 to 1794,	average annual production,	1,603,066 lbs.
	1804,		22,000,000 lbs.
	1808,		over 30,000,000 lbs.
	1808 to 1834,	average annual production,	22,000,000 lbs.
	1835 to 1838,	,, ,,	12,000,000 lbs.

The prices of sugar and coffee, and of the lesser Jamaican exports, rum, ginger, logwood, hides, and pimento, fluctuated considerably year by year.

Trade in 1846, the doom of the island seemed sealed. Many indeed in England who were no friends of the planters disliked the idea of allowing slave-grown sugar from Cuba to compete on equal terms with the sugar now produced by free labour in the British West Indies and British Guiana; but the Anti-Slavery League had been dissolved, and the advocates of free imports were now in power. In vain did Jamaica and the other tropic colonies protest that the reduction of the sugar-duty was 'a flagrant violation of national faith, consistency, and honour': the question of national ethics was overridden by the determination of British manufacturers to buy in the cheapest market.

The planters were being ruined, firstly as a result of moral principle, and secondly as a result of business expediency; but it must not be forgotten that they had themselves been as inconsistent. They had agitated for further protection in the British market when East Indian sugar infringed their comfortable monopoly; and they had protested against the tariffs which shut their goods out of the United States and Latin America. The recollection of their own inconsistency, however, was small comfort to men who saw their capital and their estates steadily diminishing in value year by year.

Difficulties after Emancipation and Free Trade.

The results of Emancipation and Free Trade combined were disastrous to the older interests of Jamaica. In 1866 it was reported that the parish of Portland contained only one sugar-estate where twenty-three had previously flourished; and most other districts were in similar condition. Elsewhere, said a visitor to the island, 'nearly all the plantations had gone out of cultivation and were now covered with woods.' Industry had decayed and crime had increased: 'many who were accustomed to estate labour were unwilling to seek other employment, and preferred to roam about plundering.'

In spite of this, and of the fact that some sixty thousand small holdings were already cultivated by the negroes, the supply of labour was too large. The religious lamented that immorality spread; the commercial regretted that trade declined. The planters had turned to other industries and other labourers when the situation looked hopeless; but fortune now evaded them as resolutely as it had favoured their fathers. Tobacco culture was tried on a large scale, but that difficult crop failed. Silk was introduced; it likewise failed. The copper mines were worked: they did not pay. Cotton was again cultivated:[1] the yield was poor. A prolonged drought took place, and smallpox broke out. And the American Civil War of 1861 interrupted their trade and raised the price of the corn which they imported.

Nor were the planters more successful with the labourers they imported to replace the slaves. In 1834 there were introduced 1091 German immigrants to cultivate the soil. They were of various trades—dyers, colliers, weavers, millers, and even musicians—but few were of any use in Jamaica, and disease and death soon removed them. Six years later, seventy-one Americans were brought in under indentures; in 1841 there arrived from Stranraer 322 Scots, and a few months afterwards some 600 other emigrants came from London and Aberdeen. Over a hundred Irish had already sailed from Limerick to Jamaica; but since O'Connell strongly denounced the system as white slavery, and the Irish had already too many unhappy memories of the days when they were sold into bondage in Barbados and the neighbour isles, that source quickly failed the planters. The creation of a 'mean white' class, to which these immigrants must necessarily have belonged, would have added another problem to West Indian life, had the experiment succeeded; but most of the newcomers died, either from the hardness of their life or inattention to the conditions imposed by the climate.

---

[1] Cotton-planting was 'much intended' in Jamaica in 1659. See report by Cornelius Burough, Steward-General of Jamaica, to the Commissioners of the Admiralty. Under Charles II. it was suggested that the 'Mainotti, who are the inhabitants of the famous Morea,' and were driven out by the Turks, should come to raise cotton in Jamaica. But sugar proved too profitable for cotton to obtain a hold.

The planters now turned their attention to the Asiatic kuli; but here again they were unfortunate, for the first Indian labourers who arrived in 1845 were but the sweepings of the streets of Madras. Fresh batches of kulis were, however, subsequently introduced with better results; and in 1870 there were 7793 Asiatics at work on the estates. By 1900 their numbers had risen to ten thousand, of whom a few hundreds were Chinese and the remainder Indians.

But Jamaica was already profoundly changed. Five years after the emancipation of the slaves it had been prophesied that the negroes would become the dominant race in the island; and each succeeding decade made the truth of the prediction more evident. Before their freedom was granted them, the blacks, though continually recruited from Africa, had been stationary so far as natural increase was concerned; once freed, their numbers had grown rapidly. The whites, on the other hand, had diminished year by year; disheartened at the gloomy future before Jamaica, they had abandoned their estates, quitted their homes, and deserted the island where fortune had deserted them. In 1808 the negro and coloured[1] population, bond and free, had been calculated at 323,827; in 1844 there were 15,776 whites, 68,529 coloured men, and 293,128 blacks. By 1891 the whites had diminished to 15,000, and ten years later to 12,000; but the blacks had increased to 488,000 in 1891, and to some 530,000 in 1900; while the coloured people numbered 122,000 in 1891, and were estimated at 140,000 in 1900.

The blacks and mulatos had proved themselves not incapable of progress; and that progress was the more creditable when it is remembered that every step forward was jealously opposed by their old masters. They cultivated their little farms with success. Many were educated in some small degree; most had been brought under the influence of Christianity. A few were magistrates; some even represented their people in the Jamaican Assembly. Generously helped by the humanitarians and liberals of Britain, the stupendous experiment of founding a negro civilisation began to make a bold bid for success.

---

[1] Coloured or mulato. In 1808 no distinction was drawn between the pure black or the mulato in the census.

The Morant Bay Rising, 1865.

Unhappily a serious disaster now marred the pleasant prospect. The blacks were dissatisfied that they could not acquire land more easily and cheaply; and they had some grounds for their dissatisfaction. They complained that they could not obtain justice from white magistrates; and there was much reason in the complaint. They found sympathisers in England; and that sympathy was not always of a judicious character. They found fluent agitators of their own race in Jamaica ready to stir them into rebellion. And they suffered, as well as the planters, from the American Civil War. Their homes, too, had been devastated by the cruel scourge of Asiatic cholera, which swept away some thirty-two thousand of their people. Although there had been a recrudescence of West African superstitions among some of the negroes in 1842, and again ten years later, they still welcomed the teachings of the Christian missionaries; and in 1861 a great religious 'revival' took place. It seems probable that the unstable character of the aboriginal African blacks was disturbed by the emotional scenes which then occurred;[1] in any case, many of them, angry with the whites, and hard-pressed by plague, famine, and poverty, listened eagerly to the idea of an insurrection in the early months of 1865.

---

[1] Some of the whites directly attributed the crime and distress to the 'revival'; one said that 'midnight meetings were held for immoral purposes, under the pretence of serving God.' The origin of the rebellion was obviously due to other causes as well: but the fact that evil as well as good springs from such scenes of religious emotionalism was clearly shown in the Welsh 'revival' a few years back.

In a country with two opposed and unfriendly races, much depends upon its government; and Jamaica had not always been fortunate in its administrators. One had been condemned as ‘an ignorant, credulous, babbling creature’; another rested under the scandalous imputation of allowing martial law to continue because his allowance was thereby increased £20 a day; many had spent their time in vain quarrels with the colonial Legislature, and equally vain appeals to the Imperial Government. But no such reproaches could be urged against the Governor of the island at the period of the outbreak in 1865. Edward John Eyre, a native of Yorkshire, who had for many years lived an adventurous life in Australia, was a man of strong, upright character, and sympathetic to the coloured races. In his official position as protector of the aborigines at the antipodes, he had tried to stop the war of extermination waged by the English settlers; and he was beloved by the savages whom he guarded. ‘I have owed my life to them again and again,’ he said, ‘and I never received from them anything but the greatest possible kindness.’ Such a man was hardly likely to oppress the Jamaican blacks.

But the times were out of joint, and a crisis quickly came. A mulato named William George Gordon, sometime a member of the Jamaican Assembly, and a passionate advocate of negro rights, had gained considerable influence by the violence of his utterances. ‘If I wanted a rebellion I could have had one long ago,’ he said, proudly conscious of his power. He grossly insulted Eyre as ‘an animal voracious for cruelty and an arch-liar’; he foretold a rebellion, and admitted that he hoped to found ‘a new West Indian republic.’ The awful example of Hayti, where a negro republic had been established after a massacre of the Europeans, encouraged the blacks and terrified the whites; and when Gordon presently endeavoured to hire a steamer filled with Haytian soldiers, while he issued a proclamation calling on the negroes to rise against their oppressors, it became obvious that a rebellion was imminent.

Gordon possessed a tool, a man named Bogle, who raised a riot on 7th October 1865, in Morant Bay. The blacks were incited to burn the local court-house and school; and they obeyed. Bogle affirmed that he would 'kill all the white men, and all the black men that would not join'; meetings were held, oaths were sworn, and volunteers were bribed. In the riot Bogle's voice was heard calling upon his followers to 'burn the brutes out. Colour for colour,' he cried, 'we want blood, we must humble the white men; never mind the women, we can get them when we want; we don't want the women now, we can get them afterwards.'

The blacks were a thousand to one, and Bogle endeavoured to win over the Maroons. The situation was perilous, but Eyre acted quickly and courageously. 'Within three days of the first intelligence of the rebellion reaching Kingston,' he reported, 'it was headed, checked, and hemmed in; within a week it was fairly crushed.' Eighty-five blacks were slain; three hundred and fifty-four were executed by court-martial. Gordon himself was tried, convicted, and shot. The dominance of the whites was saved.

Whether that dominance was seriously threatened is a question that can never be answered. Only a relatively small number of the negroes took part in the actual rebellion; but the revolt might easily have spread, had it not at once been crushed. A conquering cause is its own best argument to doubtful adherents. Remembering Hayti, the whites may have exaggerated the danger;[1] remembering Hayti likewise, the leaders of the blacks may have exaggerated the chances of success. In any case, Eyre's stern measures were certainly the most merciful in the end.

---

[1] They had done so before. In one of the later Maroon Wars, 1795-6, the British had been guilty of perhaps unintentional treachery; and General Walpole, who commanded the whites on that occasion, subsequently protested in the Imperial Parliament that he had been made a tool to further the schemes of the planters.

But the lurid accounts of bloodshed which reached Britain appalled the humanitarian sentiment of the age. Eyre was suspended, and a Royal Commission sent out to Jamaica to inquire into his conduct. It declared that he deserved praise for the vigour with which he had stopped the rebellion. But it found that martial law was enforced too long, that the punishments were excessive, the floggings barbarous, and the burnings wanton and cruel. It was also stated that though Gordon had done much to bring about excitement and discontent, there was no sufficient evidence of his complicity;[1] and that the conspiracy itself was not widespread.

Eyre was recalled, and a promising career thus ended in disgrace. There the matter might well have closed; but the enmity of the philanthropic and humane is less lightly placated than that of the savage. Eyre was prosecuted, not by the Government, but by a private association; but a very real indignation was roused by a step which seemed dictated rather by vindictiveness than by love of justice. A committee was formed in his defence;[2] subscriptions poured in from all parts of the Empire, and when the trial came, the grand jury threw out the bill. Eventually the Government repaid Eyre the costs of his defence. He had done his duty, not wisely perhaps, but too well; and it was an irony of fate that the wrath which had so long been accumulating at the injustice of the planters towards the negroes should in the end have been vented on one who had always been noted for his friendliness to the blacks.

---

[1] The Royal Commissioners themselves did not hear all the evidence, which would more fully have implicated Gordon. But the composition of the court-martial was indefensible. It consisted of two young naval lieutenants and an ensign in a West India regiment, and Gordon gave himself up when a warrant was issued against him in Kingston, where martial law did not prevail; he was conveyed to Morant Bay, where martial law did prevail, and there tried. This, at least, was a gross abuse.

[2] The controversy divided the most able men of the day. Against Eyre were Buxton, the anti-slavery reformer, John Bright, John Stuart Mill. Fawcett, Goldwin Smith, and others; for him were Carlyle, Henry Kingsley, Ruskin, Sir Samuel Baker, Tennyson, Tyndall, and many more. Tyndall hesitated, but joined the defence committee because he feared timidity might cause injustice to be done. This was perhaps the only occasion on which Huxley and Tyndall were found in opposite camps.

Change and Reform.

Change succeeded the storm. The old constitution of Jamaica, which had been granted in 1662, and which consisted of a Governor, a Privy Council, a Legislative Council, and an Assembly of forty-seven members, was surrendered. It had been the source of much trouble and many factions; and the Crown Colony system of a mixed elective and nominative assembly, proved more satisfactory. The Church of England was disestablished, and became more spiritual and active as its temporal power diminished. The expenses of administration were cut down, and salaries were paid instead of fees, which lessened the chance of corruption. An educational system was introduced, and by 1905 there were six hundred and twenty-two government schools and several private schools in the island, with a total of over eighty thousand students. A savings bank was started, railways were constructed, and new industries were introduced. An export trade in bananas was begun with England, and many other fruits were now cultivated, since they found a profitable market in Europe under the improved steamship connection which was introduced towards the close of the nineteenth century.

The increasing prosperity of the colony was checked on 14th January 1907 by a terrible earthquake, which destroyed Kingston, the capital of the island. Many lives were lost, and an enormous amount of property was wrecked; but within a few months rebuilding had begun, and by the year 1909 the island had recovered from the disaster. It is still the most valuable of the minor possessions of England, and there are some prospects that, when the Panama Canal is opened, it may become the centre of a still larger and far more honourable trade than in the old days when it was the great slave-market of the West Indies.

Hayti, 1793-8.

Many of our projected conquests in the West Indies have failed; but few have proved more disastrous than the attempted reduction of Hayti in 1793. That island, which was called Hispaniola or Little Spain by its Spanish discoverers, and Hayti or the Highlands by its aboriginal tribes, had been the scene of a terrible racial war in 1791 and the following years, when the negro slaves revolted against the fearful oppression they had suffered from their French and Spanish masters for more than a century. Under the able leadership of Toussaint Breda, a man of their own race, they had practically exterminated the whites; and when Napoleon endeavoured in 1802 to re-establish the sovereignty of France, the sole result was the loss of some twenty-six thousand Gallic troops from yellow fever.

The French might have been warned against attacking their revolted colony by the fate of the British expedition of 1793. When the negro rebellion in Hayti was at its height, the unfortunate General Whitelocke, whose failure in the Argentine some years later has made his name notorious, had left Jamaica on 9th September of that year with seven hundred men to reduce the island. He captured Port au Prince with little difficulty; and in May 1795, General Wilkinson was declared Governor-General. Eighteen thousand troops were sent to complete the conquest; but they had to encounter a more ruthless enemy than the barbarous blacks. Pestilence broke out, and death spread steadily and rapidly through the camp. By the end of September 7530 men had perished, and during the following year another 5000 died. One division of 880 men lost all but fifty of their number in ten weeks; in another regiment not a man was left alive. It was useless to hold a colony that was no more than a colossal grave; and at the close of the year 1798 the place was abandoned to the negroes.

So ended an ill-starred expedition, unlucky in inception, fatal in execution. The short British occupation left no mark on Hayti: the sole relics which survive of our forgotten pretensions to dominion in that island are the names of two fishing-villages at the western extremity of the Tiburon peninsula. One is called Les Irois, a corruption of Les Irlandais, which commemorates an abortive Irish settlement earlier in the eighteenth century; the other is Les Anglais, a contemporary English colony, which likewise failed.

Trinidad, 1797.

Far more fortunate was our occupation of Trinidad. Though the title of 'pearl of the Antilles' belongs by right to Cuba, there have not been lacking enthusiasts to claim the honour for that smaller but equally fertile and beautiful island which lies nearest of the West Indies to the South American continent. In 1797 it passed quietly into British hands; and if the country is happy which has little history, Trinidad has been more favoured than most of the sister isles.

Under the dominion of Spain it was poor and neglected; it is said, indeed, that in those days the members of its governing board had some difficulty in presenting themselves suitably attired at the celebration of the Mass. The neighbouring mainland absorbed so much of the energy of Spain that Trinidad was consistently neglected; its first real advance came when some French settlers appeared in the eighteenth century. Under British rule material progress was steady and regular; and if the emancipation of the negroes struck a hard blow at the prosperity of Trinidad, the island was fortunate in possessing other resources—cacao, coffee, and asphalt—in addition to sugar. Asiatic kulis were introduced to replace the slaves, and British institutions gradually supplanted the old Franco-Spanish ideas.

In 1814 the English language was introduced in the tribunals; the Spanish cabildo was changed to an English town council in 1840; trial by jury was instituted in 1844. The first newspaper had been started in 1799, two years after the British occupation; other more or less important or useful journals followed in later times. A bank was founded in 1837, and penny savings banks for the people were instituted fifty years subsequently, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's jubilee. The first railway was opened in 1876, and other lines were presently constructed, which had an important influence on the prosperity of Trinidad. The population had increased from 17,718—of whom 2151 were whites—in 1797, to 255,148 in 1901. Of these, some 86,000 were Asiatics.

An agitation for popular government had failed in 1845, owing to the strong opposition of the absentee planters in England; and Trinidad yet remains a Crown Colony. Two attempts at West Indian federation, in 1858 and again in 1876, likewise collapsed in consequence of the attitude assumed by Barbados. But education advanced, and many schools were founded, the inevitable sectarian religious jealousies of the rival Catholic and Protestant bodies on the island being wisely and tactfully dealt with by the Governor in 1869.

Tobago, 1763.

The little island of Tobago, or Tobaco—named from the aboriginal Carib tobacco pipe—lies a few miles from Trinidad; but the British had cast envious eyes on it long before they aspired to Trinidad. One Captain John Poyntz, who visited the place in 1683, was enchanted. 'There is no island in America,' he said enthusiastically, 'that can afford us more ample subject to contemplate the beauty and goodness of our great Creator.' But though small, it was not easily held; and it passed successively through Dutch, Spanish, and French hands before it fell to Britain in 1763. From 1781 to 1793 it was again under the French, being governed by Arthur Count Dillon, an Irishman who had taken service, as did so many of his countrymen in that age, under a foreign king; but on 15th April 1793, it was captured by the British, and, with the exception of a few months in 1802, it has since remained under the Union Jack.

Its history offers little worthy of special note. Though fertile, not more than one-tenth of the soil has been cultivated. The sugar-estates, which had numbered seventy-five in 1832, fell to sixty-five in 1867; a terrible hurricane twenty years before had destroyed many hundreds of houses and much other property, and reduced the island to the brink of ruin; a great crisis in the sugar-industry of Tobago took place in 1885, and the sugar-cane has since been generally replaced by tobacco and cotton. In 1854 the troops which had previously guarded the island were withdrawn to Barbados, to the loss and alarm of the community, which remembered a projected conquest of Tobago by the Americans during the Imperial Civil War. The British Government, however, allayed these fears by the promise that a naval vessel should always be kept within easy reach of the island—a promise that has not always been faithfully fulfilled.

But despite these vicissitudes, Tobago was generally fairly prosperous. Its education and police were comparatively good, and there was little idleness in the island; but the laws of Tobago, said Woodcock, the Chief Justice and annalist of the colony, were 'more crude and insensible than those of any civilised country with which he was acquainted'—a sweeping assertion, when it is remembered that he had studied the British civil and criminal law of the day, itself too often chaotic, contradictory, and unjust.

The population of Tobago in the year 1901 was 18,750.

Grenada, 1762.

The most southerly, and therefore the nearest to Tobago of the Windward group of the West Indies, the small but extremely beautiful island of Grenada—originally called Ascension by Columbus—had at one time been nominally in the possession of Spain. Yet it appears never actually to have been occupied by the Spaniards; and when in the seventeenth century some French adventurers appeared on its coasts, they were welcomed by the native Carib chiefs, who parted with the sovereignty of the island for some knives and hatchets, and a large quantity of glass beads, besides two bottles of brandy. Unfortunately the amicable relations, thus pleasantly and informally inaugurated, did not continue for long; and a few years later the aborigines were exterminated.

The alien settlers were now securely possessed of Grenada; but the place was subject to many calamities, and in the year 1700 its inhabitants numbered only two hundred and fifty-seven whites and five hundred and twenty-five blacks. The great wars of the eighteenth century brought still more changes of fortune. The island was captured in 1762 by the British, and retaken by France in 1779; finally restored to Britain in 1783, its troubles were not yet at an end. The negro slaves were numerous and discontented; and when their unrest was aggravated by the risings in Hayti, a general rebellion broke out on 2nd March 1795. With few exceptions the planters were absent in England; and the forces on the island were terribly inadequate to deal with the revolt. In many cases the whites were surprised at midnight while asleep, and either murdered at once or marched off to the dense forests of the interior, where they were tortured and afterwards shot. Not until the British fleet under Sir Ralph Abercromby arrived on 9th June was order restored.

A long constitutional struggle followed, which only ended in 1877, when Grenada, like many other of the British West Indian provinces, was proclaimed a Crown Colony.

Industrially, however, the place was more fortunate than several of its neighbours. The British Sugar Act of 1846 brought little hardship, for the sugar-cane had already been largely supplanted on the island by cacao, which some of the planters gratefully dubbed 'the golden bean,' in reference to the respectable fortunes it had made for them. Some two thousand kulis were introduced to replace the slaves; but Grenada was already densely populated by negroes, who had become contented freeholders and small farmers after their emancipation in the year 1834.

The total population in 1889 was 50,393, and in 1905 it was estimated at 69,530.

The Grenadines, 1763.

To Grenada belong most of the small, rocky Grenadines, which fell to Britain in 1763. With a total area of eighty-six square miles, their population is now some seven thousand, the people being engaged mainly in plantation work and fishing. These three hundred 'long, low islands of quaint form and euphonious names, rising a few hundred feet out of the unfathomable sea, bare of wood, edged with cliffs, and streaks of red and grey rock,' wrote Charles Kingsley, support 'a quiet, prosperous race of little yeomen, besides a few planters; the latter feeding and exporting much stock, the former much provisions, and both troubling themselves less than of yore with sugar and cotton.'

St. Vincent, 1627.

The next link in the great Windward chain is St. Vincent, which was among the earliest of the islands claimed by Britain in the West Indies, having been granted by the King of England to the Earls of Carlisle in the year 1627. But the densely-wooded mountains and valleys of the interior were inhabited by fierce aboriginal Carib tribes, who would certainly have attacked and probably have exterminated any alien settlement; and for many years no attempt was made either by the English or the French to occupy St. Vincent. The island, in fact, was declared neutral territory by the two nations in 1660 and again in 1748. Some daring pioneers, however, had obtained a precarious foothold on its shores; and they appear to have prospered, since their numbers increased. The year

1740 found eight hundred whites and three thousand negro slaves inhabiting St. Vincent.

At the Treaty of Paris in 1763 the island was ceded to Britain, in whose possession it has since remained, with the exception of the four years from 1779 to 1783. But the settlers had many misfortunes to encounter from the hands of nature and of man. In the year 1780 the most destructive hurricane that has ever visited the West Indies wreaked its full force on St. Vincent; other storms, less fatal, but hardly less terrific, have swept the colony from time to time.[1] In 1812 there was a disastrous eruption of the great volcano which dominates the island; ninety years later, on that dreadful day in 1902 when the explosion of Mont Pélée plunged the neighbouring French colony of Martinique in mourning, another eruption reduced half St. Vincent to ruins.

Thus heavy lay the hand of nature on the island; but St. Vincent was not on that account immune from troubles caused by man. In the year 1795 the savage Caribs overran the white settlements, burning, plundering, and murdering where they might; and although they were defeated after a long struggle, the danger of another native rising was not checked until the main body of the aborigines, to the number of some five thousand, were transported to Honduras in 1797. The island suffered severely, like most of its fellows, from Emancipation in 1834 and Free Trade in 1846; many of the sugar estates were no longer profitable, and were allowed to go out of cultivation, while the white population dwindled year by year. In 1874 there were only three hundred and eighty-eight electors to the Legislative Assembly; the Assembly itself was abolished shortly afterwards. The revenue showed a regular annual deficit, and in 1901 the colony felt the pinch of poverty so acutely that no census was taken, on account of the expense.

---

[1] The old West Indian rhyme of warning as to the hurricane season runs:—

In June too soon,
July stand by;
August, you must.
September, remember:
October, all over.

Most hurricanes occur in August, hence 'you must' always expect them in that month.

The twentieth century, however, brought some improvement. Although the cultivation of sugar had practically ceased, other industries were now introduced: the production of cotton[1] and arrowroot increased; and the negro peasant proprietors and small agriculturists who had been established by the Government on lands acquired for that purpose, maintained themselves in comfort.

The population of St. Vincent in 1891 was 41,054, of whom 2445 were whites.

St. Lucia, 1639.

St. Lucia, wild, romantic, and beautiful, was first seized by the English in 1639, and conquered, lost, and reconquered twelve times before it finally passed to Britain in 1803.[2] Its fine harbours made it a magnificent base for a European fleet in the West Indies; the deep, rich soil was profitable to settlers; but its swamps, earthquakes, hurricanes, and tropical rains made the island extremely unhealthy,[3] a misfortune which was not minimised by the intemperate habits of the older planters. The population was mixed: the French predominated at first, and in later years English, Scottish, Irish, and German immigrants appeared. But the ruin of the sugar trade worked the same change in St. Lucia as elsewhere: the whites declined and the blacks increased. The numbers of the former fell from 2018 in 1772 to 1039 in 1843; the negroes increased during the same period from 12,795 to 14,368, and the mulatos from 663 to 5287.

---

[1] Cotton-growing proved so successful that complaint was made a few years later that there was not labour enough in St. Vincent to tend the crop.—London *Times*, 6th August 1908.

[2] The vicissitudes of St. Lucia are summarised in vol. i. bk. ii. ch. vi.

[3] A parsimonious governor of the island once took advantage of its unhealthiness when entertaining a bishop, to whom he should have offered accommodation at his official residence. 'I suppose your lordship has heard of the insalubrity of this place,' he said. 'Every room in the house has already witnessed the death of some governor, but none of them has had the honour of killing a bishop—so, my lord, you have only to make your selection. I leave you to the *embarras du choix*.' I have forgotten whether the bishop decided to risk the possibility of a premature taste of the joys of Paradise.

Some industrial advance was noticeable in the early part of the twentieth century; and although St. Lucia could never be described as healthy, its population increased, and a fair measure of general prosperity was attained. In 1905 the inhabitants numbered 53,389.

Dominica, 1756.

The British colony of Dominica lies midway between the two French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, at rest after the long strife of two centuries. Spanish by discovery, as its name proclaims, French by early settlement, as its capital of Roseau indicates, Dominica fell to England in 1756. A mongrel dialect of French that would have been disowned in Europe remained the common tongue of the people until English gradually supplanted it; but many of the old Gallic inhabitants still remained on their estates when the island was forced to change its allegiance.

Coffee and sugar were both cultivated successfully. In 1793 there were three hundred plantations in Dominica; but Emancipation, Free Trade, and the sugar beet wrecked its prosperity in the nineteenth century. The primitive methods and defective apparatus of the agriculturists, together with their conservatism and lack of capital, stood in the way of improvement for many years; but in later times cacao, spices, and tobacco were grown with success. A physician whose name is still remembered with gratitude, one John Imray, introduced the lime, which throve and became a profitable object of export; and the prospects of the island, which some admirers have declared to be the most beautiful of all the West Indies, are now brighter than they have been since the year 1846.

The population in 1901 was 28,894.

The Leeward Islands, which lie to the north and west of the Windward chain, have not differed greatly in their fortunes from the other West Indian colonies. They are fertile and beautiful; they have attracted the adventurers and planters of England and France; they were disputed by the two nations in the age of their prosperity, and the same economic causes which wrecked the Windward Islands have also brought the Leeward islanders near to ruin.

St. Christopher, 1623.

St. Christopher or St. Kitts was the first of the group to be connected with Britain; and from St. Christopher the colonisation of the surrounding islands has sprung. In the month of January, 1623, when one Thomas Warner, 'a worthy, industrious gentleman' and the forebear of a notable West Indian family, arrived at St. Kitts with a small company of followers, he found the soil and climate both favourable to settlement; and although three Frenchmen were already established there, they proved not unfriendly to the newcomers. Both grew and prospered together; and for many years the two peoples lived in amity and peace, the English occupying the middle of the island, the French planters residing on either side.

But these happy conditions were too idyllic to last; and the same embittered struggle eventually broke out between the French and English settlers in St. Kitts as elsewhere. The rivals were not always unequally matched, but the advantage generally inclined to the British; and after many vicissitudes, the island eventually passed finally to England. Its population and industries had suffered severely during the contest for possession; yet even that contest was less disastrous to its interests than the economic changes of the nineteenth century.

The population in 1901 was 29,782, a decrease of more than thousand during the decennial period.

The island of Nevis, which is separated from St. Kitts by a narrow arm of the sea, was occupied by the planters of the latter colony in 1628. Its annals have been less agitated than those of the older settlement, although its fortunes have generally followed the same course: the most noteworthy event in its history, the birth of Alexander Hamilton in the year 1757, was the one from which it profited least, since that great statesman left the colony as a youth, and devoted his energies to a larger cause than his home could offer.

Nevis, 1628.

The population, which is decreasing, was 12,774 in 1901.

In the year 1632 Montserrat was likewise colonised from St. Kitts; its population was mainly Irish. The healthy climate and fertile soil of the island rendered it prosperous and happy; and when sugar was no longer so profitable a crop as of old, attention was given to cacao and arrowroot, and especially to the lime fruit from which the popular lime juice cordial is made.

Montserrat, 1632.

The population in 1901 was 12,215.

In the same year that Montserrat was first occupied, a few English pioneers from St. Kitts settled in the larger island of Antigua. But the progress of colonisation was slow; only eight families had established themselves in 1640; and although the place was healthy, it suffered much from drought, and more from the various proprietors to whom the Kings of England granted it. Internal intrigues and insurrections hampered it more than foreign invasions;[1]

Antigua, 1632.

---

[1] In 1710 the Governor of Antigua, who had been appointed through the Duke of Marlborough's influence, was murdered in a popular riot. His public conduct is said to have been as arbitrary as his private life was infamous.

There were many intrigues to obtain the comfortable posts in the West Indies. See, for instance, a letter dated 14th November 1708 (*Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Hodgkin MSS.*), in which the Governor of St. Christopher complains to the Duke of Marlborough that his enemies 'had raised £5000 in order to get me removed and Codrington in my post; and if, because of Codrington's distemper in the full and change of the moon they cannot get him in, then they are to endeavour to get in an Irish gentleman. I hope your grace will not let me be removed, now I am seasoned to the climate, having endured so many hardships by sickness and the hurricane.'

but its sugar, tobacco, cotton, and pine-apples furnished profitable crops.

Of late years, however, the fortunes of Antigua have regularly declined; and the population, which was 35,073 in 1901, has diminished considerably.

Barbuda and Redonda, 1661.

The two islands of Barbuda and Redonda, which were for many years the private possession of the Codrington family, were first occupied in the year 1661. They are dependencies of Antigua.

Anguilla, 1650.

Anguilla, the 'snake island,' lies between the Leeward and the Virgin Islands. Its petty and uninteresting annals are mainly concerned with the recurrent droughts which visit the colony. Its population in 1901 was 3890.

Turk's Island, 1678.

Turk's Island, so called from its native cactus plant, the Turk's head, was first occupied by salt-rakers from Bermuda in the year 1678. That useful but uninspiring industry has provided its inhabitants with a livelihood; it has not given them a history.

Turk's Island is governed from Jamaica; the same administration controls Caicos, the Cayman Islands, Morant Cays, and Pedro Cays. All were at one time favourite haunts of the buccaneers; they now furnish a more regular but less exciting employment to turtle farmers. The total population in 1905 was about five thousand.

The Virgin Isles, 1666.

Next to the Leeward Islands in a westerly line lies the archipelago which derives its name of the Virgin Isles from the ancient Christian legend of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins. The group was contemptuously dismissed by one of the Earls of Cumberland as 'a knot of little islands, wholly uninhabited, sandy, barren, and craggy.' They are now inhabited by some five thousand persons, white, black, and mulato; but the archipelago saw many strange vicissitudes before the majority of the islets finally passed to Britain.

In the year 1625, Charles I. granted Tortola, the largest of the archipelago, to the Earl of Carlisle, but nothing was done to make good his claim in the eyes of the outer world. A more effective occupation was that of the Dutch buccaneers, who seized the islands in 1648, and were only ejected eighteen years later by a stronger party of pirates. These latter, to give some show of legitimacy to a wholly illegitimate proceeding, hoisted the British flag over the camp, and their claims were recognised by the British Government.

This petty addition to the empire being thus equivocally acquired, the Virgin Isles presently assumed an attitude of innocent respectability more in keeping with their name, as freebooters diminished and honest planters increased. But the first settlers had engraved their calling too deeply on the maps to be forgotten. Freebooters Point and Dead Chest Island, across and around which the restless currents boil and race as though to ravish those frail bits of earth, that are huddled together as if for protection from the boisterous caresses of the wild Atlantic, have immortalised the memory of their first fearless occupants.

Tortola, the largest of the group, is said to be as unhealthy as its population is mixed: 'the managers of estates drop off one after another,' wrote a visitor to the place; but the same reproach could be brought with equal justice against every member of the archipelago.

The Bahamas, 1629.

The Bahamas or Lucayas are a lengthy chain of some three thousand islands, islets, rocks, reefs, and coral sand-bores; the smaller are often mere shifting and dangerous reefs, the larger are honeycombed by caverns, eroded or added to by the ceaseless action of the sea.

The original inhabitants were exterminated by the Spaniards, who compelled them to work in the mines of the larger neighbouring islands of the south. But the Bahamas were never colonised by Spain, although Ponce de Leon and others, deceived by the fable of a fountain of youth, which was said to exist there, visited the place and bathed in the island springs. Their faith was futile. . . .

But the English people had early fixed their eyes on the outstretched archipelago. In 1578 a title to colonise the Bahamas was granted to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, but no settlement was attempted; a grant to Sir Robert Heath, however, dated 30th October 1629, attracted a few persons thither to form a colony, which was given the Biblical name of New Providence, after the Puritan fashion of the day. Twelve years later the establishment was exterminated by Spain; and the next settlement that rose among the Bahamas, on Eleuthera Island, was formed by religious exiles. New Providence was re-taken from Spain in 1666; but the then recently-established town of Nassau was again captured in 1684. Again restored to England, the islands now became the haunt of pirates, who harassed the neighbouring West Indies and the Spanish main with their sudden and daring attacks.

In 1718, however, Captain Woodes Rogers was appointed British Governor of Nassau, and the depredations of the freebooters were put down with a stern hand. Many German Protestants settled on the islands, and comparative quiet reigned until 1775, when the Bahamas were taken and abandoned by the American rebels during the Imperial Civil War. Once again they fell to Spain in 1781; but they were recaptured in the following year, since which time they have remained undisturbed in British possession. Many of the American loyalists came hither after the foundation of the United States; and although for some reason they were unpopular in the Bahamas, they yet brought much prosperity to the islands.[1]

But the soil was generally poor and quickly exhausted.

---

[1] Some hard words were said about the Bahamas during the Imperial Civil War. In 1776 the Chief Justice of the islands wrote (*Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Report*, Appendix) that the inhabitants treated the Governor with contempt, and that they could not be worse if they had been rebels. The Governor himself was not less emphatic, observing that 'the servants of the Crown were all engaged in carrying on an extensive

The abolition of slavery, which was submitted to after an angry struggle, completed the economic ruin of the place. Many of the planters left for America, and a dreary period of unrelieved poverty settled down on the Bahamas. A sponge fishery, the cultivation of fruit and fibre, and the increasing use of the islands as a health resort, lessened in some degree the difficulties with which the inhabitants struggled; education was improved, and the Anglican Church became more active after its disendowment in 1869.

Yet the prospects of the Bahamas are still far from bright; the population suffers greatly in physique and intellect from continual interbreeding; and the area of the islands is too small, and its people not sufficiently enterprising, for any considerable access of prosperity. The estimated number of inhabitants in the whole group at the end of the year 1905 was 58,175.

Barbados.

Of Barbados, the oldest English colony in the West Indies, and the most English in social tone of all the islands, there is little to be said. It suffered as severely as its neighbours from Emancipation and Free Trade, but it showed somewhat more recuperative power. Sugar remained a profitable crop, and in 1904 over sixty thousand hogsheads were produced; while cotton was also introduced, and yielded year by year a larger return. Seven-tenths of the soil of the island is under cultivation. The population, which is increasing, was 199,542 in 1905.

Political Disunion of the West Indies.

The obvious lack of unity in West Indian annals, which is so irritating to the historian, has exerted a seriously prejudicial effect on the economic condition and development of the islands. They seem indeed to have been foredoomed by nature to political disunion. In several cases they are separated from each other by many miles of water. They were colonised at

and lucrative trade with the rebels; (the place is) a second hell.' I have no knowledge of his excellency's qualifications for making the comparison.

different times, often by different classes of men, sometimes by different nationalities. No sense of a common interest animated the various settlements, which were in fact frequently at enmity among themselves and with each other. Every little island possessed its own system of administration, which, with a Governor and a two-chamber Parliament, reproduced the essentials of the English forms of liberty. Every petty community was practically independent of its neighbours and of the rest of the empire in the conduct of its own affairs. And although the people had often good reason to complain of the Governors who were sent out by the imperial authorities to rule them, the Governors themselves frequently found equally good reason to complain of the turbulence of the local Assembly.

But there was no general federation of the West Indies; and even when a minor union of a small group of islands was effected, as in the case of St. Christopher, Montserrat, Nevis, and Antigua in the year 1690, it soon fell into desuetude.

The political machinery of the provincial and local governments was excessive; that of the colonies as a whole was defective or rather altogether absent. In later years, it is true, some reforms have been made in the local administration. As the number of whites declined and that of the negroes increased, the old form of popular government, modelled on that of England, was withdrawn; many of the elective Assemblies of the islands were abolished at their own request, and a small Council, wholly or partly nominated by the Governor of the colony, succeeded them. This system of Crown Colony administration is generally admitted to work well, being both more efficient and more economical than the original two-chamber institution;[1] and the limitation of popular election in a small community of mixed races can hardly be said to cause any real danger to liberty.

---

[1] The full and perhaps excessive machinery of Governor, Legislative Council, and Assembly—a reproduction in miniature of the King, Lords, and Commons of England—still survives in Barbados, the Bahamas, and the Bermudas, which are therefore not Crown Colonies.

But the larger problem of a general federation of the West Indies has not yet been solved. Efforts have indeed been made from time to time to bring about a political or commercial union. But they failed altogether in the old days of golden prosperity; in the more recent times of adversity they have been equally unsuccessful. Towards the close of the nineteenth century the historian Froude suggested that the obstacles to union lay rather in the antiquated methods of the British Colonial Office than in the West Indies themselves; but, however well-founded that view may have been at one time, it is no longer true. The real difficulty lies in the fact that each of the islands possesses its own code of laws, its own constitution, and its own finances. Some of the islands are insolvent, while others are prosperous; and no project of union has yet been put forward that has not met with insuperable objections and opposition.

More ambitious, because more comprehensive, schemes have been adumbrated for the union of the West Indies with the United States or with Canada. The former presupposed their secession from the empire; but despite the wishes of those who pointed out that the islands were now connected more closely, both commercially and geographically, with the United States, the pronounced loyalty of the West Indians revolted from the idea.[1] The second project, for union with Canada, was more favourably received, but the obstacles in the way were considerable; and although some of the islands, notably the Bahamas, were not unwilling, others seemed reluctant to resign their old and cherished independence.

But if the West Indian colonies were separated politically one from another, a rough unity underlay the minor differences of their social life. In every island there were three distinct grades of population: the white aristocracy of planters, the 'mean white' class, and the negroes. The first possessed all the wealth, all the privileges, and the sole power of ruling the island; they made and administered its laws, they owned its land, they directed its commerce. The second, which consisted of the foremen or clerks employed by the planters, or the descendants of the indentured white labourers who had been imported in the early years before negro labour was available, were despised by the estate-owners and their slaves alike. The third class, the slaves, were the industrial basis of the island. They were by far the most numerous of its inhabitants; they were also by far the least influential.

---

[1] But see the articles by Richard Jebb on the West Indies and the Empire in the London *Morning Post*, June 1909.

Similarity of Social Conditions.

The institution of slavery, and the condition of the slaves, demands separate discussion in another chapter. The 'mean whites,' whose labour was practically superseded by that of the negroes, have been a negligible factor in West Indian history. The estate-owners, the planter aristocracy, set the tone of social life in every island.

The Planter's Life.

Before the emancipation of their slaves, the planters were generally prosperous and frequently extremely wealthy. They supervised the cultivation of their crops, they sold them to the merchants who dealt in colonial produce in England, and they extended the area of cultivation whenever the expanding market promised a sufficiently profitable inducement. They controlled their slaves, kindly or severely according to their nature, or the apparent necessities of the case; and they dispensed a generous hospitality among the visitors to the island. The lavishness of their establishments became proverbial; the brilliance of the entertainments which were given by them in the small colonial capitals was often envied by the travellers who were favourably received among the ruling class.

But such entertainments were rare and exceptional incidents in the planter's life; the greater part of his time was passed in solitude on a remote estate, where his slaves were his only neighbours. Cut off from the society of his equals, it is hardly strange that he often pined for his old home in England, and wished to exchange the brilliant colouring of the tropics for the leaden skies of Europe.

Sometimes his desire was fulfilled. If profits were good, he appointed a manager for his estate, and forthwith deserted the sugar-fields of Jamaica or Dominica for the ballrooms of London or Bath. Henceforth his visits to the West Indies were brief and spasmodic; the revenue of his plantation was remitted to his banker in England, and the retired cultivator lived in stately and gorgeous ease as an absentee proprietor.

More often the planter spent the best years of his life in the country of his adoption; and he frequently became reconciled to an exile that was by no means without compensations. Some of the owners of estates, particularly in the smaller islands, enjoyed the pomp of their position and the uncontrolled power with which they were invested. These men, who knew that they would be of very small importance in England, seldom returned to Europe for long: the plantation became their home.

Some of the planters, indeed, lived from generation to generation on their estates; several West Indian families can show a continuous descent of their lands from father to son for three centuries, and these proprietors naturally developed a hereditary love of their adopted country. But even among these the close ties of blood relationship with England were always carefully fostered and preserved. Occasionally, it is true, the sons married the daughters of other West Indian planters. But on a small island the range of choice was limited; in general they sought their bride in Britain. And some of their children were born, and many were educated, in the motherland, whence they returned as adults to the West Indies, to take up their position as proprietors, and to brave the risks of fever in a climate that brought sudden death as well as speedy wealth to Europeans.[1]

In general it must be admitted that the manners and morals of the West Indies in early days, thanks to the peculiar circumstances of social life in those colonies, left something to be desired. There were few white women in the islands, and many of the planters consoled themselves with caressing the daughters of Ham. But neither matrimony nor monogamy was held in much honour, since the European settler could compel the dusky embraces of any of his female slaves whenever it seemed good to him to do so. According to his passions or his wealth, he contented himself with a 'housekeeper' or a harem; according to his own character or the charms of his mistress, he treated her indulgently, kindly, or cruelly. In general, perhaps, he enjoyed her sex but despised her race; and he recognised or ignored their joint offspring as he chose.

The Mulatos.

Such offspring was neither white nor black, but mulato or 'coloured'—a fruitful source of both trouble and pleasure in the West Indies. The mulato girl, generally delicate of constitution, often singularly beautiful in figure and feature, was a source of more exquisite, perhaps of more refined enjoyment, than the negress. The mulato youth, however, was obviously less useful; and being neglected, he often developed the evil traits of both white and black races, which might otherwise have remained latent. Quick and passionate, or sullen and morose in turn, he possessed the childish inconsequence and proneness to run to extremes which characterises the negro, together with the restless strivings after change and some love of the ideal, which is inherent in the white—a peculiarly dangerous combination.

---

[1] I have looked through many British West Indian genealogies, but have found none in which there was a continuous descent in both male and female line of native white colonists. The subject is of some importance in connection with the colonisation of the tropics by Europeans (see bk. xiv. ch. iv.). But it must be remembered that the wealthier and more important families alone have their pedigrees in the books, and these were precisely those families which maintained their connection with England most closely, and which had therefore most opportunities of marrying European women. The limitation of choice in the West Indies was the governing factor in these cases. Poorer men had to be content with a local choice of wives, but even here there was a continual reinforcement of new blood available; for the wives of wealthy planters brought out ladies' maids from England, only to complain that they broke their contracts and married within a month of their arrival.

The Latin races of South America mixed more successfully with the negro and the native redskin than the English in the West Indies and North America. Miscegenation took place on a much larger scale on the tropical mainland; and the universal testimony of witnesses admits that it was attended with better results.[1] But the half-castes of the West

---

[1] The following list enumerates the chief terms describing the racial mixtures in America:—

Negro.—Full blooded negro, whether born in Africa or of African descent.

Mulato, half-breed or half-caste.—Issue of black or white parents either way—a constant term in America.

Mestizo.—Any half-breed, whether of white and negro parents, or (more commonly in Spanish America) of white and redskin parents.

Creole.—Mostly white of pure descent, but also black of pure descent (Brazil), the issue of whites and mestizoes (Peru), and mestizoes generally (Alaska).

Zambo.—Any half-breed, but mostly the issue of negro and redskin parents; in the United States, Peru, and West Indies of negro and mulato; in St. Vincent the half-caste Caribs.

Zambo Preto.—Issue of negro father and zambo mother (Mexico and elsewhere).

Cholo.—Issue of zamboes (South America).

Pardo.—Synonymous with mulato (Brazil) and mestizo (Argentine).

Mamaluco.—Any mestizo, but especially the issue of whites and redskins (Brazil).

Chino.—Negro and redskin half-caste (Mexico and Spanish America).

Casco.—Direct issue of mulatos on both sides (South America).

Tente en el Ayre.—Mongrels in whom the white element predominates (South America).

Cafuso.—Issue of negro and redskin, dark shade and woolly hair predominating (South America).

Caburet.—Issue of negress and redskin (Brazil).

Indies, unlike the half-castes and Eurasians in many of the East Indian islands, never attained a distinct social footing of their own. They were never received as equals by the exclusive white aristocracy of the place; nor, on the other hand, did they care to associate with the slave or free negro population.

But the emancipation of the slaves in the year 1834 brought a mighty change in the relative positions of white aristocracy and black populace. The planters still possessed their estates, and the market for their produce was as profitable as ever; but they had no longer any certain supply of labour. The negroes unfortunately had little desire for that steady employment which is an essential of successful industry. Before their freedom became absolute, they were indeed bound for some years as apprentices to their old masters; but in many cases they struck work long before the expiry of their term, and they frequently refused employment altogether afterwards. They were free men, and as free men they claimed the right to be idle; and since life is easy and wants are few in tropical lands, neither hunger nor cold, those continual incentives to industry in higher latitudes, compelled them to labour.

In this respect the immediate results of the change were bad for both the whites and the blacks, and for the colonies as a whole. The work of the estates was disorganised, the expenses of the plantations went up, and production went down; and while the negroes were no longer slaves, they seemed likely to derive no advantage from a liberty of which they were apparently incapable of taking advantage.

The difficulty might have been surmounted within a short

Cariboco, Tapanhuna, Xibaro.—Local Brazilian names for various crosses between negroes and redskins.

Quarteroon or Quadroon, Quinteroon, Octoroon.—Negro and white half-breeds, with fresh infusion of white blood each successive generation. In the proportions of one-fourth, one-eight, one-sixteenth black blood, the octoroon scarcely being distinguishable from a white.

time, so far as the planters were concerned, by the importation of kulis or other free labourers under contract, or bound by indentures for a term of years. The thoughts of the estate-owners had, indeed, already turned to this solution of the problem, when a far greater disaster than emancipation overwhelmed them. In the year 1846 the protection which their products had always previously enjoyed in the English market was abolished, and free trade in Britain killed the prosperity of the British West Indies. The English planters in the tropical colonies, who were still heavily handicapped by the labour troubles resulting from the abolition of slavery, had now to compete on equal terms with the growers of slave-produced sugar and coffee in other parts of the world. Success was impossible under these conditions, and the planters were not without some justification for the complaint that they had been betrayed by the mother country. But the cry of treachery, however well-founded, is small consolation to a ruined man.

Britain did not go back on her free trade policy ; and from that blow the white aristocracy in the West Indies have never recovered. Their methods were conservative, and for some time they seemed unable to introduce any new industries which might have succeeded better than their old products ; not until the close of the nineteenth century, in fact, when an annual grant-in-aid was made by the Imperial Government to the West Indian colonies, was any real improvement noticeable in this respect.

But by far the most important step that was taken to restore the old prosperity of the West Indies was due to Joseph Chamberlain. As Colonial Secretary of the Imperial Government, he saw and deplored the increasing poverty of the West Indies, and their inability to compete with the European sugar-beet, an industry subsidised by heavy bounties granted to the producers by continental governments. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the subject in 1897, and after an International Conference of the European Powers had discussed the question, it was agreed that the sugar bounties should be abolished in 1902. The decision was condemned by some of the British manufacturers who used sugar in large quantities, since they profited by the bounties, which had reduced the price of sugar in the world's markets below the normal cost of production for many years past; but it relieved the West Indian planters of the unequal handicap which had nearly ruined them, and their gratitude to Chamberlain for his decisive action was deep and lasting.

Increase of the Free Blacks.

The numbers of the whites decreased year by year, as estates were abandoned and plantations deserted when they were no longer profitable; but the black population grew steadily. So marked was the change that some observers confidently predicted a time when the West Indies should become pure negro communities, governed indeed by Britain as British colonies, but in all other respects under black domination. That time has not yet come; nor, despite the fact that the white planters are still faced with considerable difficulties, does it appear likely that they will consent to resign their possessions unless some fresh and unexpected stroke of misfortune disables them.

Their Condition.

The condition of the negroes since the abolition of slavery has been variously estimated. The historian Froude remarked on the extraordinary happiness of their lives; and many others, who have only gained a superficial knowledge of the light-hearted blacks, have considered that their situation was an ideal one, since they appeared to have few cares and no hardships. A closer view would modify the details of the picture without denying the truth of its main features. If the negroes escaped the whip of the hard-hearted slave-driver, they missed also the care of the more considerate masters. They had now to fend for themselves; and while their numbers made wages low, the losses of the planters reacted prejudicially on the labourers they employed. And in the year 1909 the Chief Justice of Antigua remarked that 'it appeared to him that under the present system of labour laws, no one could help sympathising with the labourers, who, he thought, were in a far worse state than was possible in any slavery days.'[1]

There was some exaggeration in the statement; for the blacks as a whole had improved their condition very considerably. If the negroes had often deserted the plantations and had proved unsatisfactory day-labourers, they enjoyed considerable success as small farmers in an independent condition. Their industry, it is true, was seldom excessive;[2] but it was not inadequate to the occasion. And they took full advantage of the opportunities of acquiring the lands which the Imperial Government set aside for their use; a body of negro agriculturists gradually came into being, who lived contentedly on the produce of the fertile soil, and who seldom displayed any desire for a more ambitious career either for themselves as individuals, or for their people as a race. They were easily governed in the paternal or patriarchal manner, and, so long as their immediate wants were satisfied, they were among the most peaceful and inoffensive inhabitants of the whole empire.

Yet if the sympathetic spectator could rejoice at the improvement in the material condition of the negroes since they had become free citizens of the British empire, he could not repress a sigh at the continued inadequacy of their morals. The emancipation which brought them liberty had not sufficed to convert them to virtue, in the European sense of the word. Black women still lived with white men after the abolition of slavery; and the fact that they did not sever a connection to which they and their race had become accustomed need by no means be attributed to compulsion.

---

[1] The *Barbados Advocate*, 28th June 1909.

[2] It need hardly be said that the popular expression 'to work like a nigger' derives from pre-emancipation days.

Less honourable forms of traffic disgraced the capitals of the West Indies, and moved the wrath of residents and visitors alike. Open prostitution was everywhere abundant. 'None can pass through the streets of our towns,' it was reported from Trinidad, 'without having ample evidence of the utter degradation of our lower-class females.'[1] In St. Lucia, too, it was stated that 'any improvement in morality was more in shadow than in substance; after emancipation the females made an experiment of prostitution, as of everything else, to test the extent and security of their newly-acquired rights.'[2] Nor is it anywhere suggested that the results of the experiment were either distasteful or unprofitable.

Similar evidence might be cited from each of the islands; but it is unnecessary to multiply the unedifying anecdotes which would prove the laxity of tropical morals. Chastity may indeed have been valued among the West Indian negroes; but it was valued as the naturalists of Europe value the okapi, on account of its rarity rather than its beauty. It is true that the marriage ceremony was occasionally observed as a decent preliminary to conjugal partnership by punctilious couples, but the majority of the blacks preferred the free if temporary bond of nature to the irritating and frequently inconvenient restraints imposed by the religion and civilisation of the white man. A visitation, a religious revival, or an epidemic, such as the outbreak of cholera in Jamaica in 1854, resulted in the marriage of many who had been content to live in concubinage; but when the memory of the exciting cause grew faint, old habits re-asserted themselves as strongly as ever. Of the children born in Antigua in the year 1905, seven in every ten were born out of wedlock; and the proportion, although extraordinarily high in comparison with other countries of the world, was not exceptional in the West Indies.

---

[1] Report of Inspector of Prisons, 1874. One M'Callum, who travelled in Trinidad in 1805, was so shocked at the sight of 'vice arrayed in putrefaction' that he could not resist giving several lively examples of the prevailing immorality in a book on the subject.

[2] Breen's *St. Lucia*.

But if wisdom, as an ancient maxim holds, is justified of her children, ignorance seems to produce a more ample brood. For while the fecundity of legal marriage among the cultured whites in Europe and America was steadily declining, the birth-rate of the primitive and free-living negro people in the West Indies and elsewhere showed no sign of diminishing vitality. Their children may have been illegitimate, but at least they succeeded in getting themselves born.

Book XIII

THE EUROPEAN INVASION OF AFRICA: 1440-1807

CHAPTER I

THE DARK CONTINENT[1]

The dark continent has been for all the ages a hidden mystery to Europe. In times of greatest ignorance there have been traditions of Asiatic civilisation; there was always a dim knowledge that somewhere in the East another life existed, that other modes of thought found acceptance among the sons of men. And if the size and boundaries of Asia were unknown, they were at least inaccurately guessed at. Men could speak of Cathay and India; some travellers had even penetrated there. But over Africa the blackness of night has ever hung. With the single exception of Egypt and the Roman colonies along the Mediterranean coast, the whole interior of the continent was unknown to Europe until the nineteenth century. Its condition and resources could hardly be speculated about, since there were no materials for speculation. Few of its inhabitants had been seen in Europe. Its vast forests, and the innumerable fauna which existed there, were unsuspected. None believed that to the south of the Sahara[1] religions grew and faded, kingdoms waxed and waned, rude syntheses of savage empires were evolved and lost.

---

[1] Authorities.—The ancient writers, from Herodotus downwards, contain little more than fable and myth when they treat of Africa. The various works on Egyptology, which are constantly being added to, have elucidated many facts of ancient Egyptian history; but hypotheses are still tentative and dangerous when inquiries are incomplete. Gibbon relates the history of Northern Africa under Roman influence and the Musalmán conquests. Bent's *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, Hall, Neal, and Johnson's *Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia*, and A. H. Keane's *Gold of Ophir*, are among the many works that discuss the forgotten kingdoms of the south.

Hakluyt and Purchas may be studied for the early modern explorers; the later travellers, Mungo Park, Livingstone, Stanley, Speke, and their successors of to-day are the chief and indeed the only authorities for Central and South Africa. Sir Harry Johnston's works on *Uganda*, *Liberia*, and *George Grenfell* contain a mass of information.

We moderns, indeed, are unable to reconstruct the picture from the fragments that have been recovered. The records are not complete; it is impossible that they ever should be. Much of the life of preceding ages has been irrevocably lost.

Egypt.

Some relics there are, it is true, which throw a glimmering light upon the past. We know that Egypt was the home of possibly the first civilisation that appeared on our globe. The Semitic races who lived there evolved a high form of culture, in times that were until recently accounted prehistoric or fabulously ancient. The Sphinx, the Pyramids, and the ruined temples of the Nile are mute remains of their empire; but the lists of their dynasties, the books of their religion, the works of their artists, have been recovered; and we gaze reverently at the first achievements of the human family, magnificent as they are, as the sign that man had developed from the savage nomad into a thinking, progressive being; even as the flints and metals in cave or rock are proof that the nomad in his turn had taken the first stupendous step from a still lower state along the road that was to lead later to the greatest works to which man can yet lay his hand and say, They are mine; to the future realisation of ideals which we to-day perhaps but dimly perceive, as we press forward hopefully into the unknown. . . .

---

[1] Properly Sahra, dissyllabic. The absolute chaos which at present exists in the spelling of all but the most common African place-names is distressingly noticeable. Any word that is not obviously European in origin is written and pronounced in a dozen different ways, and each and all can claim to be correct. The same formerly obtained in India, but that reproach was wiped away from the British Asiatic dominions by the great survey and gazetteer of Sir W. W. Hunter. Since then all Indian place-names have been standardised both in spelling and pronunciation; and although many still cling to the old method, the correct way is laid down for all who choose to walk therein. It is perhaps not too utopian to hope that this method may be copied in British Africa. The advantages are not confined to the mere standardisation, albeit that is useful enough; but in addition, a great amount of historical and statistical information would become available in ordered and accessible form, for which at present one may search in vain through a whole library. As in the case of India, the result would be out of all proportion to the cost.

Carthage and Rome.

The next civilisation that arose in Africa was at Carthage; but when the increasing Roman power turned the entire Mediterranean into a Latin lake, both Carthage and Egypt fell before it; and the ruins of the imperial Roman colonies extend along the whole of the northern coast.

As an integral part of the Roman Empire, northern Africa exercised a certain influence upon the European world. Egypt became the chief granary of Italy, and from its port of Alexandria were sent most of the supplies for the citizens of the imperial capital. Thought as well as commerce flourished near the delta of the Nile; the neo-platonic philosophy found a ready home in Alexandria, and spread thence into Europe. And when Christianity advanced its hold upon the empire, the first monks and hermits, who lived on the banks of the Upper Nile, likewise spread their orders and their way of life throughout the West. In the hot climate of Egypt and northern Africa, those interminable disputes on religious dogma and ecclesiastical ceremonies, which broke out as soon as the new religion had ceased to fear persecution, grew even more angry and tumultuous than elsewhere; the faith of the Church was debated with a zeal that often broke the civil peace. Yet Africa gave many leaders to the creed it held so firmly; and the names of Athanasius and Augustine, of the fiery Tertullian and the learned Origen, may well be considered to outweigh the fact that the heretic Arius was a presbyter of Alexandria.

But the Roman settlements in Africa, albeit for a time magnificent and flourishing, were little more than exotics; and when the empire fell, its colonies disappeared completely. A curious record of the buried Latin cities was disclosed by the explorations of Barth;[1] the remains which he discovered show how far into the interior the Romans had penetrated. Five hundred miles from the coast was their utmost limit.[2]

They could not go further than they did; the dead waste of the Sahara blocked the way. And notwithstanding the zeal of the faithful, the primitive Christianity of Africa died with the Empire, save where a debased version of the creed has survived the vicissitudes of thirteen centuries in Abyssinia. Almost the last adherents of its teaching were destroyed by the onward march of Islám; forsaken generally by the people and despised by their new rulers, the doctrines of Christ seem to have lingered on in a few secluded monasteries, whose half-ruined walls remain the sole evidence of the religion that once dominated northern Africa. In less than a century after the flight of the Prophet Mohammed from Mecca, Islám was supreme in the land from the Red Sea to the Atlantic; and it remains to this day the only belief of the north.

Islám.

Again a civilisation arose in Africa, and again it was alien to the soil. In place of the Semitic culture that had existed in Egypt, perhaps but not certainly native to the Nile valley, in place of the Roman culture, that bore the essential stamp of European ideas, Islám introduced its own special forms, which have undergone little real modification whether in Spain or India, in Morocco or Asia Minor.

---

[1] A more comprehensive search may yet recover some of the lost works of Greek and Roman literature.

[2] It took the English two centuries to do as much in America, with precisely the same facilities of transport, but with the additional spur of gold to lead them on, which latter incentive the Romans never had. And in point of time, the Roman colonies in Africa lasted nearly eight centuries; the oldest European settlement in America, the town of Isabella in Hispaniola (Hayti) was only four centuries old in the year 1893. But the English people are more firmly planted in America, at least in its temperate regions, than ever the Romans seem to have been in northern Africa.

Its first-fruits were more brilliant than those of its elder rival, Christianity. As a militant religion, its progress was infinitely quicker; a hundred and ten years after the Hejira its hosts had found their utmost limits in the invasion of France, and its mosques and schools were already established among the negroes of the Niger basin. From Western Europe, indeed, the Musalmáns were eventually expelled; but in Africa Islám had found a permanent home.

Islám possessed the northern provinces; and the roving habits of the Arabs soon spread the knowledge, if not the profession, of their creed among the scattered inhabitants of the great desert. There is a tradition that those tribes were once Christian; if so, it is improbable that their belief would be stronger than that of their northern neighbours. Were they, on the other hand, of a different faith, no record of the struggle survives; but we know that the Musalmáns quickly became masters of the Sahara, and laid the foundations of those great states which during the Middle Ages rose to luxury and power, and of which we can still see the shadowy and impoverished remains.

The Asiatic Dominance of Africa.

The unity of the Musalmán Empire, however, was of short duration; and Africa was soon separated from the original kalifates of Arabia and Syria. But the influence of Asiatic ideas remained; and the rulers of the north, as well as the Arab merchants on the east coast of Africa, at such places as Zanzibar and Mombasa, and the Arab travellers who went inland in search of gold, slaves, and ivory, were mainly Musalmáns of Asiatic origin. They had no sympathy with the aboriginal Africans; they recognised no kinship, as they had none, with the people with whom they came in contact; and though they pursued their vocations in the wildest parts of the interior, they have left little information as to the routes by which they travelled or the methods by which they carried on their traffic.

Three main facts, however, stand out from even the most cursory survey of African history, and they must constantly be kept in mind in touching upon its past. 1. Practically the whole of the aboriginal tribes, of whatever creed, race, or colour, were destitute of the ability to progress beyond a certain not very advanced stage. 2. That being so, they fell a prey to any alien race of superior attainments which discovered them. 3. Although access from Europe was difficult, from Asia it was easy; and whatever traces of civilisation are found in Africa seem therefore to have had an Asiatic origin.

The early traditions of white men or Europeans in the interior are vague and uncertain;[1] and in the absence of anything but doubtful tribal legends, we are justified in disregarding them. In any case, whether Europeans reached the middle of the continent or not, they had no appreciable effect on African life. With Asia, on the other hand, communication was regular. It was by no means difficult to traverse the Red Sea and thus to reach Egypt. The deserts of Africa had few terrors for those who knew the deserts of Arabia. The Indian Ocean was continually crossed by light Asiatic barques. Trade was carried on with the natives in the ports which sprang up on the east coast. Commerce was inherent in the Semitic character, and most of the Asiatics who reached Africa seem to have been Semites; on no other supposition can one account for the remains of Semitic buildings and the survival of Semitic customs in the interior.

With what commodities the visiting merchants made their purchases one can only surmise; but the surmise has a high amount of probability. The use of money was not known to the natives of Africa, but the barter of goods was common; and it may be assumed that the love of bright cloths and ornaments was as strong two or three thousand years ago among the aborigines as to-day. An inexhaustible supply of these articles from the looms and skilled workers of southern Asia equipped the trader with a medium which would purchase anything he required.

---

[1] See, for instance, the wild tale in Herodotus (bk. ii.) of five youths crossing the desert to a country inhabited by Ethiopian dwarfs. Gibbon refers to other legends of white men in the interior, but discredits them. The American aborigines had similar accounts of white men in the interior (vol. iii., bk. x. ch. iii.) equally devoid of foundation.

African Commerce: Gold, Ivory, Slaves.

The goods he bought were the three staple products of Africa through all the ages: gold, ivory, and slaves. Ivory was probably the least profitable and the least sought after, since it was obtainable in Asia; but slaves and gold were ever valuable. And slaves could be purchased from any African chief. The more powerful would sell the captives they had taken in war—and war was frequently made for the sole purpose of obtaining such prisoners—a few of whom were equivalent to many beads and rolls of cloth for the adornment of the royal dwelling and person; the lesser chiefs might sell their own subjects without compunction.

It seems likely that at first the Arabs traded solely with the chiefs on the coast, although the slaves would frequently be brought from the interior; later, as the traffic increased, the Arabs penetrated inland, offering their price to whatever ruler possessed the necessary prisoners or subjects. In this way developed the slave-driver and the gangs of slaves who were marched from the interior down to the sea, and shipped thence to India or elsewhere.

The history of the traffic in gold, and probably also in precious stones, is less easy to reconstruct. By some means a Semitic nation became possessed of the knowledge that gold existed in enormous quantities in Central South Africa.[1] Seeing that much of it lay on the surface, it may be conjectured without excessive improbability that the aborigines discovered it, and brought it down to the coast as a likely object of barter. If it did not become known in this way, it would perhaps be by their use of it as an ornament, or by mere verbal reports, of the character that so often deceived the Spanish and English explorers in America. Be that as it may, the Asiatic merchants, either after a period of buying the gold from the natives on the coast or immediately on discovery of its existence, seem to have set off in search of the metal; and the relics of their operations have been discovered in the ruins which we see to-day in Mashonaland.

---

[1] Compare 1 Kings ix. 26-28, where Solomon sends his navy to Ophir.

The remains of cities, fortresses, and temples, which have been found in that country have led to much speculation on their past. It seems certain that they were built by an alien race, for no African people is known ever to have reached so high an intellectual level as to have been capable of their construction. It seems certain that this race came from the north, for the architecture shows that only the northern stars were observed in a land where the southern constellations were also visible. It is supposed that the people who inhabited these cities were Semites, for the peculiarities of Semitic construction and worship are strongly in evidence. It is a reasonable theory, based on the situation and strength of the buildings, that their inhabitants were a colony of strangers in a land of enemies, and therefore exposed to constant attacks.

As to the date at which the invasion took place, or that at which the colony came to an end, or in what manner it came to an end, our present knowledge is insufficient to decide. The gold mines were not exhausted; and since there are distinct evidences of their having been worked with some degree of mechanical skill, it is not probable that they were abandoned because they were unprofitable. It is inconceivable that the demand for the commodity fell short. The idea that the alien colony was absorbed by intermarriage with the aborigines may be dismissed. The remains of

Semitic words and customs that have been discovered among the tribes to-day are not more than mere casual, and possibly hostile, intercourse will account for. There is no appearance of a mixture of race, such as would surely persist if a strongly marked type like the Semitic had become merged in another; and the notorious exclusiveness of the former, which would be emphasised when dwelling in a land of obviously inferior people, together with the enmity with which the aborigines certainly regarded a nation which enslaved and sold them, finally shuts out all likelihood of general intermarriage. A sudden end to the colony by plague or unexpected attack seems the most probable solution; but here we are on the extreme verge of unprofitable hypothesis.

The Arabs, however, continued to trade on the coast and at other places in the interior; and they still possessed a monopoly of African commerce when the Portuguese arrived in the fifteenth century, and recognised in them their hereditary enemies under the name of Moors, a term which survives in the English epithet of blackamoors.[1] But the details of their trade they successfully kept secret, and of the information we have of Central Africa, there is little that has not been derived from European sources.

The African Aborigines.

The several aboriginal races of Africa, which are obviously in many cases of fundamentally different origin, present characteristics as varied as those of any other continent; but in the failure of all alike to progress beyond a certain point lies the key to the stagnation of Africa.

The form of society in almost every case has remained elementary. A fertile soil has provided the first necessities of life. A tropical climate has handicapped exertion. The rudiments of agriculture, but no more, have been learned by most of the tribes. Organised cattle-raiding from a weaker neighbour has furnished the village braves with employment and the headmen with an easily calculable form of wealth. The less intelligent, or the physically feeble, have been driven to take refuge in parts which the relatively advanced races disdained; and the arid wastes in which they have had to grub for roots to sustain life have in turn reacted on their low capacity. It is by no accident that the most miserable specimens of human beings in Africa are found in the Kalahari desert.

---

[1] See vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii.

Progress has come, where it has come at all, chiefly by force: a man of stronger character than his fellows has imposed his will on a number of families, and become a chief; a chief of stronger character than the other headmen has become a king. By a series of conquests, always bloody, mostly brutal, neighbouring tribes have been subdued. If the conquest held, they were amalgamated with the victors, or they passed under the yoke of slavery. In some such way arose the great kingdom of Uganda in Central Africa, and the great confederations of the Matabele, the Bechuanas, and the Basutos in the south. But in the majority of cases the conquest was unstable; the death of the warrior was the end of the kingdom he founded. In the absence of a fit successor, able also to force his will upon the people, there was no security for life or property; and in consequence neither could advance beyond the most rudimentary condition.

Among the whole of the aboriginal races, there is no evidence that any have ever risen to a conception of monogamy. Under such conditions, a woman is a plaything, a breeding machine, or a beast of burden, frequently all three successively;[1] and her degradation necessarily implies that of the man.

---

[1] It was one of the difficulties of the missionaries in the West Indies that a negress occasionally refused to go through the ceremony of marriage. If she simply lived with her paramour she could leave him when she liked and was therefore free, but matrimony made her the slave of her husband. The same argument against the legal tie has been urged by certain reformers in Europe. I have not, however, observed that the alternative is much in favour.

There is no certain record of any African people having discovered the use of the alphabet, or possessing any method of orthography.[1] Deprived of this, there can be nothing but traditional lore, handed down from father to son; and although unsuspected treasures of learning may lurk in the legends of the tribes, none of value have yet come to light.[2] In their absence, superstitions have flourished that frequently descended to indescribably degrading fetichism: the witch-doctor, the medicine man, and the magician, have been supreme; the base practices of serpent-worship and the dark rites of Obeah have enthralled generation after generation. Cannibalism has been rife, and thousands of human sacrifices have been offered year by year to appease the wrath of those brutal and revengeful deities which are the aboriginal African conception of the superhuman powers. The gods of the dark continent have delighted in the murder, the torture, and the suffering of their votaries; and, since man fashions his gods after his own desires, the murder, the torture, and the suffering have been faithfully inflicted as a religious duty by every tribe upon its enemies.[3]

The whole of the African tribes were always in a state of flux; and although certain general limits bounded their migrations, their aimless wanderings within the circle marked out for them by the habits of surrounding nations were as the acts of children who foresaw no future. The analogy, indeed, of their wayward and impetuous natures and inconsequential acts with those of children is one that has struck every traveller from Speke to Cecil Rhodes; and it is equally evident to those who have had dealings with the negro in the West Indies. Lifelong children as they were and are, seemingly cursed to reach a certain stage of development and to go no further, it is probable that they have changed little in essentials during the last thousand years; and, left to themselves, it is probable that they would change as little during the next thousand.

---

[1] A prolonged controversy has raged of late as to the system of orthography in vogue among the tribes on the Niger. I have examined some of the evidence, although I cannot pretend to have studied it all. But the influence of Islám has been at work for centuries in those regions, and it seems highly probable that whatever evidences of civilisation are found there are of Mohammedan derivation.

[2] The familiar fables of Brer Rabbit and Uncle Remus are pure Bantu tales which were brought by the slaves from the coast of West Africa. This is the one negro contribution to the general imaginative literature of the world.

[3] The early converts to Christianity often believed that the deities of other creeds were the evil spirits of their own religion. The idea was frequently grotesque, and it was always a sign of that spiritual pride which Christ rebuked in His disciples; but when it was applied to the native gods of Africa it was not without some foundation.

The European Dominance of Africa.

But they were not left to themselves. Africa had been invaded from the east by Asiatics; it was invaded in the fifteenth century from the west by Europeans. The Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the French, and the English now appeared and took possession. Their stations were at first but ports of call for vessels trading with the orient; but in time the slave trade was inaugurated, and Africa was denuded of its people to provide labour for America.

For such work it was unnecessary to go inland, since slaves in plenty could be obtained on the coast. The energies of Europe were given to the reduction of Asia; and for centuries Africa was neglected. 'I speak of Africa and golden joys,' cried braggart Pistol, referring probably to the discovery of gold on the west coast;[1] but few stayed to listen, and fewer still thought seriously of settling there. India was discovered, traded with, and in part conquered; America—which, like Africa, had been discovered in the search for India—was colonised; and still Africa, in Spenser's phrase, remained an Ishmael,[1] forgotten and unesteemed, save as a base for the supply of slaves. Had it been realised that Africa contained riches equal in many respects to those of Asia, the course of the world's history might have been essentially different; but it was not until near the end of the eighteenth century that the systematic exploration of the dark continent was begun; and not until the middle of the nineteenth did the possession of territory there seem desirable to European nations.

---

[1] An anachronism in Shakespeare is about as unimportant as a plot in a modern musical comedy; but, seeing that Pistol's speech is placed in the year 1413 (see 2 *King Henry IV.*, Act v. Sc. iii.), and the first Portuguese voyage to Africa only took place in 1412, he must have had unusually prompt intelligence of the event—unless the rogue lied as usual.

Then the explorer was followed by the missionary, the missionary by the soldier, the soldier by the administrator, and the administrator by the commercial traveller; and Africa, the last of the world's continents to be invaded by Europe, was at length subdued by the white man, as the 'hideous hunger of dominion,'[2] led him to seize the still hardly known lands of the interior.

But the process of subjugation, though long delayed, had already begun when the first European stations were established on the coast; and the subjugation of Africa was itself but a part of that larger and indeed universal conquest by which the strong have everywhere imposed their will upon the weak.

The bitterest comment on the whole movement was made by Swift. 'A crew of pirates,' he wrote in *Gulliver's Travels*, 'are driven by a storm they know not whither. At length a boy discovers land from the topmast. They go on shore to rob and plunder; they see a harmless people; are entertained with kindness; they give the country a new name; they take formal possession of it for their kind; they set up a rotten plank, or a stone, as a memorial; they murder two or three dozen of the natives, bring away a couple of men by force for a sample; return home and get their pardon. Here commences a new dominion acquired with a title by divine right. Ships are sent with the first opportunity; the natives driven out or destroyed; their princes tortured to discover their gold; a free licence given to all acts of inhumanity and lust, the earth reeking with the blood of its inhabitants, and this execrable crew of butchers employed in so pious an expedition is a modern colony sent to convert and civilise an industrious and barbarous people.'

---

[1] *Faerie Queene*, bk. iii. canto iii. stanza vi. 'Beyond the Africk Ismael.' A century later the *Spectator* identified the atheists with 'that polite people,' the Hottentots of South Africa, whose name had become known and was now used in England as a term of contempt; and Fielding made one of his heroines aim her deadliest insult at Squire Western when she compared that bluff country gentlemen with a member of the wretched tribe.

[2] *Faerie Queene*, bk. ii. canto x. stanza xlvii. The 'hideous hunger,' which Spenser here reprobates in Cæsar, he thought an admirable virtue in his friend Ralegh.

There is enough truth in the satire to make it sting, enough error to make it inapplicable to many a noble scheme in which the advantage of the aborigines has been honestly sought. But unhappily the same acts of cruelty stain the record of every great European nation that has turned its energies to the conquest of the outer world. The work of exploration, of pioneering, of colonising, is the rough work of the earth; and it has been roughly done. As in the greater universal evolution of nature, there has been little kindness, little sympathy for the feeble or the fallen in the grim struggle; the weaker goes to the wall, the stronger takes possession, and turns the former master into the slave.

The history of Africa, and not merely of Africa, but of every land where the natives have been ousted by the whites, bears out Gulliver's remarks; and proud though Europe may be of the majesty of empire, of the march of progress, of the formation of a future world-civilisation, there is still the remembrance of the seamy side in the wreckage and despair of other races, which have proved less efficient in the pitiless battle of life. They have fallen before their masters; but those masters must in shame admit that too often they have shown themselves possessed of scarcely better qualities and no greater humanity than the savages whom they have conquered.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST BRITISH STATIONS: 1618-1807[1]

In the original discovery of Africa, as of India, our countrymen can claim no part. An expedition thither was indeed projected from London in 1481; but the remonstrances of Portugal were so pressing that the scheme was abandoned, and for half a century more no British vessel touched the shores of Africa. The whole continent, according to the famous papal bull of 1493, belonged to the Portuguese by right of discovery; and that right was not lightly to be challenged. Crosses had been placed along the coast as a sign of Christian sovereignty, and forts were erected at intervals as more solid tokens of Portuguese possession. The authority of the Latin name supplied what other safeguard was needful.

The Early Voyagers, 1530-54.

But in the year 1530, according to Hakluyt, 'old Mr. William Hawkins of Plymouth,' in the course of his three famous voyages to Brazil, 'touched at the river of Sestos upon the coast of Guinea, where he trafficked with the negroes, and took of them elephants' teeth and other commodities.' The trade, however, was not followed up; and another twenty years passed. In 1553 two ill-fated ships from London again reached Guinea, where they obtained 150 ℔s. of gold; but the two commanders and most of the crew perished. Another expedition a year later was more successful: 400 ℔s. of gold, 250 elephants' teeth, and a quantity of Guinea pepper were brought home.

---

[1] Authorities.—The *Historical Geography* of Sir C. P. Lucas has an excellent summary of early European trade in Africa. Many sidelights are thrown on the first British stations by the books relating to the slave trade, which are mentioned in the following chapter. Sir H. H. Johnston's *Colonisation of Africa* may also be consulted. For the African trading companies, Macpherson's *History of Commerce*, and the transactions of the companies themselves with their defenders and detractors, as preserved in a series of pamphlets in the London Guildhall Library. There is much additional information on Sierra Leone in the annual reports of the directors of the Sierra Leone Company, the *Life* of William Wilberforce, and the accounts of other leaders of the Evangelical School.

The Gambia Station, 1618.

Thenceforward English trade with the Guinea coast grew more regular. In 1562 the traffic in slaves was begun by Sir John Hawkins, son of the 'old Mr. William,' who was the pioneer Anglo-African merchant; and the 'demi-Moor in his proper colour bound with a cord' became a prominent feature of the family coat-of-arms. Sixteen years later the beginnings of corporate effort were seen. A patent was granted to certain Exeter and other west country and London merchants to trade to 'Senega and Gambia'; they were given a monopoly of the traffic for ten years. In 1592 another patent was granted to the Taunton merchants to trade to Sierra Leone; and finally in 1618 the first Africa Company was formed. From that year dates the first British settlement in Africa.

The Gold Coast Station, 1618.

A fort was erected on the Gambia, and another at Kormantine on the Gold Coast. It was believed that Timbuktu, that city of mystery in the interior, whose reputed magnificence had long been renowned in Europe, but over which the glamour of the unknown hung until the nineteenth century, was the great gold mart of the continent; and in the year 1620 an expedition thither attempted to sail up the river Gambia. But disaster wrecked it: 'The ship was betrayed,' wrote Governor Jobson, 'and every man left in her had his throat cut by a few poor dejected Portugals and mulatos, whom they gave free recourse aboard, being only banished people, and for the most part runnagadoes from their country.' A second expedition penetrated two hundred and fifty miles up the river, but lost all hope of setting eyes on Timbuktu;

and for many years no further efforts were made in that direction.[1]

The English forts increased slowly in number from the original two, to nine in 1749; but many vicissitudes attended those petty establishments on the African coast. The climate was more than unhealthy: it was deadly. The Africa Company could hold out no such inducements as brought men to the East India Company. The life in their settlements was dreary, and it presented fewer opportunities of enrichment by private trade.

The Struggle for Trade.

Yet the same nations that were contending for America and India were again found as rivals in Africa; and the struggle for a foothold on the Guinea coast—for hardly any effort was made to explore the interior—was scarcely less severe. The Portuguese power was already declining when the British appeared. 'In all these places hereabouts where we used to trade,' said an English merchant at the close of the sixteenth century, 'they have no fort, castle, or place of strength, but only trading by the negroes' safe conduct and permission.' And the Dutch historian Bosman wrote contemptuously of them that they only 'served for setting dogs to spring the game, which, as soon as they had done, was seized by others.'

But if the Portuguese power fell rapidly after the annexation of that kingdom by Spain, other nations were ready to take their place. The Danes, the French, and the Dutch appeared on the scene; and though the first were hardly serious competitors, the Dutch were soon far ahead of the English. They formed a settlement at Cape Town in 1651, as a port of call for the vessels trading to their Indian possessions; and in the west of Africa they attempted to establish a monopoly. They captured Elmina from the Portuguese, and both they and the French frequently threatened and sometimes conquered the English stations.

---

[1] In the year 1730 the chief fort on the Gambia contained, according to a traveller quoted by Mungo Park, a governor, deputy-governor, and two other chief officers; eight factors, thirteen writers, twenty inferior attendants and tradesmen; a company of soldiers, thirty-two negro servants, with sloops, shallops, and boats, and their crews. There were also eight smaller stations on this river.

Goree, 1663.

The changes in the West African possessions of the European nations were in fact almost as kaleidoscopic as those in the West Indian islands. We may cite as typical of the rest the rocky station of Goree. Originally acquired by the Dutch in 1617, it was captured by the English in 1663. Recaptured by the Dutch in the following year, it was taken by the French in 1677, and held by them until 1692. In that year it was again captured by the English, but restored to France within a few months. It now remained in French hands over half a century; but in 1758 the English took it once more. Restored to France at the Peace of Paris in 1763, it was captured by the English in 1779. Again given back at the peace of 1783, it was again conquered by the English in 1800. Four years later it was again restored, but recaptured by us in the same year. During the Napoleonic wars England held it fast, although it was defended, said its Governor, by ‘ the sweepings of every parade in England . . . not a bad set of fellows when there was anything to be done, but with nothing to do they were devils incarnate.’ Finally in 1817 Goree was restored to France.

Such continual conquests and reconquests prove two points conclusively. The West Africa trade was considered extremely valuable, or there would not have been so severe a struggle to obtain a foothold on the coast. And the tenure of all the stations was precarious: they were in no sense colonies, but merely trading depots; and so far from encouraging any settlement, the companies owning the stations were at pains to expel any interloper, even of their own nation. They argued correctly that he would not have gone to West Africa for any other purpose but commerce; and such commerce must necessarily be at their expense.

The Africa Companies and the Slave Trade, 1662-1821.

In the first half of the seventeenth century the Dutch were the most successful traders on the west coast; and they owed much of their profit to the traffic in slaves, which they had engaged in almost from the first. The English, to their credit, shrank for a while from that nefarious business, despite the evil example set them by Hawkins; and when it was suggested to Governor Jobson by the aborigines in the early years of the Gambia settlement, he replied nobly that the English did not deal in those commodities, 'or in any that had our own shapes.'

A change came with the incorporation in 1662 of the 'Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading to Africa.' King Charles II. and the Duke of York were among its patrons; and the Company was specifically formed to engage in the slave trade. From that time the British gradually gained the ascendency on the west coast and as the slave merchants of the world; and one of the first signs of their growing power was the acquisition from the Dutch in 1667 of the important fort of Cape Coast Castle, where for the future the agent-general of the Company resided, with the title of 'General of Guinea from Sierra Leone to Angola.'

But the original Africa Company was not successful; and another took its place in 1672, with a capital of £111,000, and possessed of the sole rights of trade over the whole of Guinea. The forts were increased and strengthened; and while gold, diamonds, and ivory were exported to England, slaves were sent to the American plantations. In 1698, however, the trade was thrown open to all, on condition of a payment to the Company of an *ad valorem* duty of ten per cent. for the maintenance of the forts in proper condition. But when in 1712 the duty expired and was not renewed by Parliament, the Company soon found itself in difficulties, and in 1729 petitioned that the forts might be maintained 'as marks of the possessions of Great Britain.' The petition was allowed, and for many years an annual vote of £10,000 was granted for the upkeep of the Guinea forts. In 1752 the Company was reconstructed, and continued without change till it was finally abolished in 1821.

Sierra Leone, 1787-1807.

But by this time the slave trade in its ethical and moral aspects had touched the conscience of England; and the first indication of the change was the acquisition of the protectorate of Sierra Leone in 1787. The coast bearing that name was already well known to European traders. It possessed one of the few good harbours in West Africa, together with an easy land route into the interior; and it was noted, according to an old mariner, for 'excellent water continually running.' Portuguese merchants and missionaries had long frequented the spot, which was at once a centre of the slave trade and of Catholic missionary effort, with marts for the purchase of negroes and chapels for their spiritual redemption. The English, too, had used Sierra Leone for more than two centuries; and on the rocks around were inscribed 'the names of divers Englishmen who had been there, amongst the rest Sir Francis Drake.' And by a curious but happy coincidence, the district which was chosen in 1787 for the first practical English effort to improve the condition of the negro races was the very place where in 1562 Sir John Hawkins had begun the English traffic in slaves.

On 22nd August 1788, the local chief of the country made a treaty with the King of England, ceding him a tract of land twenty miles square on the coast of Sierra Leone. Three years later the Sierra Leone Company was incorporated, at its head being some of the leading philanthropists and anti-slavery agitators of the day. Their desire was 'the pleasing hope of introducing civilisation and Christianity into Africa'; the colony was to be a land of refuge for the negro, possibly a land of settlement for the white; and its foundations were to be, not the detestable traffic in human beings, but agriculture and the yet undeveloped trade with the interior.

Within a few years Sierra Leone had as mixed a population as any country on earth. Some four hundred negroes who had escaped from the West Indian plantations to England, and who were now declared by English law to be free men, were transported thither. To these were added eleven hundred loyal American negroes, who since the Imperial Civil War had lived in Nova Scotia; five hundred Jamaican maroons; all the slaves captured from the traders, and called 'Willyfoss niggers' from the fact that their liberation was due to William Wilberforce; a few English, Dutch, and Swedish emigrants; and sixty prostitutes from the streets of London. It was believed that the ladies would marry the negroes, and henceforth lead virtuous lives amid new and possibly congenial surroundings.[1] It does not appear that they did either the one or the other.

But the colony never obtained a fair start. In 1790, before operations had properly begun, the original town was burnt by a native chief, as an act of vicarious revenge for the destruction of his village by the crew of a British vessel. Freetown was founded in 1793; but the following year it was looted and destroyed by the French. The neighbouring tribes were often, and the European slave-traders always, at enmity with Sierra Leone; and the internal affairs of the settlement did not run smoothly. The pestilential climate caused continual sickness and many deaths. The Nova Scotian negroes were lazy and turbulent. 'It required,' says one of the Company's reports, 'much persuasion to make those settlers engage in any culture which did not yield an immediate return'; they 'preferred eating in a miserable way to climbing the hill, where they might enrich themselves by exertion.' Field work could only be carried on by hired native labour ; and it was evident that if the assistance of the whites were ever withdrawn the whole place would quickly revert to savagery and slavery. The only bright spot, in fact, was the improvement of the negro children, which was 'too visible to admit of doubt.'

---

[1] The good philanthropists should have remembered the common-sense maxim of Horace: 'Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.'

Under the administration of Zachary Macaulay—who had been a book-keeper on an estate in Jamaica, and who returned home disgusted by the cruelties he witnessed there—matters improved somewhat as regards the government of the place ; but the inhabitants themselves were hopeless. A new epoch, however, was now dawning for Africa ; and in the year 1807, when the English slave trade was abolished, both Sierra Leone and the Gambia stations were taken over, and henceforth directly administered by Britain. From that time the mission of England in Africa was to civilise and elevate the negro peoples.

CHAPTER III

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE: 1440-1865

When the Portuguese traders from Africa first appeared at Lisbon in the year 1440 with a cargo of negroes and gold dust brought from beyond Cape Bojador, the slave trade, and with it the negro problem, the problem of the treatment of an alien and inferior race by the superior, was introduced into Europe. Some half century later, the first cargo of negro slaves shipped across the Atlantic introduced the same trade and the same problem into America.

The negro slaves were not, however, brought in any great number to Europe, where slavery had diminished to serfdom, and even serfdom itself was dying out.[1] But within a few decades they had become the indispensable foundation of all industry in the American tropics; and the negro problem had by that time become a permanent factor in the history of the western world.

---

[1] Serfdom was not finally abolished in Prussia until 1702, in Denmark until 1766, and in Russia until 1861.

To the white races of the fifteenth century, however, the discovery of the negro was not a problem, but the solution of a problem. Concurrently with the discovery of wealth in the two western continents that only needed labour to make its proprietors fabulously rich came the discovery in the southern continent of a physically strong but mentally undeveloped and ignorant people who could be forced into slavery.

The Latin invaders of America had no compunction in making full use of the lucrative traffic that opened out before them. Every other nation with interests beyond Europe regarded the matter in the same light; and the ethics of slavery hardly troubled the world until near the close of the eighteenth century. It was highly desirable to become rich quickly and easily; and slave labour, whether of West Indian Carib, South American aborigine, or African negro, provided the fulfilment of that desire. Unfortunately for the exploiters of America, the native races of the new world were not sufficiently strong or numerous to carry out the work now assigned to them. Some tribes remained intractable, and retreated to the interior, where they maintained their savage freedom undisturbed for centuries; others who were brought under control, died out quickly as a result of the unaccustomed labour, the harsh treatment they received, and the loss of their liberty. The stronger negro slave was found to replace them satisfactorily; and his arrival in America, in numbers that increased almost every year, was for a time the solution of the labour problem in the tropics.

It was not seen that, at the back of so simple and convenient a solution, lay the wider problem of the negro races; and that again was but part of the still larger question of the domination of race by race, of the existence side by side of white, brown, yellow, and black men, equal with, or in authority over, one another. The difficulty of that problem, and the supreme horror, from which we still shrink, of looking into the ultimate issues raised by that train of thought, burst upon the world suddenly, as the nineteenth century neared its close.

Slavery in Europe.

The theoretical writers on human freedom, of which school Rousseau was the leading prophet, were agreed in regarding equality and liberty as the natural right of every race. No such doctrines troubled the slave-dealers. And it is difficult to see why any doubts as to the legitimacy, to say nothing of the righteousness, of their proceedings should have arisen among them. Leaving on one side the factor of their pecuniary interest in the traffic, they were not outraging any canon of the general European code, written or unwritten, in the sixteenth century.[1]

Slavery had existed among the Latin and Teutonic races alike. The villeins and, in older times, the bondmen and actual slaves of England are obvious examples of a system which had its counterpart in every country throughout the Middle Ages. In England, it is true, the lowest ranks of serfs and the slaves died out as every order of the people advanced; but in other lands men were not so fortunate. Western Europe, indeed, made gradual progress upward from a social usage that held one man as the bond-servant of another; and it would probably be impossible to find the least trace of it to-day in France, Germany, or the Netherlands, save perhaps in some of those conventional courtesies and modes of address that always linger long after the substance has been abolished. But among the Slavonic races the remains of slavery are still to be seen; and serfdom was still a legal institution in nineteenth-century Russia.[1]

---

[1] It is true that Elizabeth denounced the slave trade as a 'detestable act which would call down the vengeance of heaven upon the undertakers.' But she knighted Hawkins, who introduced the trade into England. That Elizabethan England recognised that the slave, like 'your asses and your dogs and mules,' was used 'in abject and slavish parts' is shown by the *Merchant of Venice*, iv. i. ; but Shylock's argument 'the slaves are ours' was probably accepted as a sufficient answer. On the other hand, there was a distinct feeling of aversion from the slave trade in England in the early seventeenth century. That Governor Jobson of Gambia was not alone in his repugnance to the traffic in those 'that had our own shapes' is proved by the fact that every settlement in English America, from Virginia to Georgia, relied on white labour in its earlier years, and only turned to slave labour when the white bond-servants transported from England proved unsatisfactory. And the large number of slaves exported from Africa by the Royal Africa Company after the Restoration helped to create the demand, while public opinion, becoming used to the traffic—of whose worst features it was ignorant—degenerated into easy acquiescence.

We may acquit therefore on one count men of the stamp of Sir John Hawkins, who made their fortunes by the export of negro slaves from Africa to America. They knew not what they did; and it is small disgrace to any man that he does not think in advance of his age. On a merely academic view of the case, it would seem that we might also acquit the majority of the planters of any deliberate cruelty to their slaves. A slave was a valuable animal whom, on the mere ground of self-interest, it was folly to ill-treat. There were indeed instances of utter heartlessness and wanton torture; these were proved up to the hilt in many cases; and from the nature of things, but few examples from the grand total could become known. But now that the thousands of agitatory pamphlets issued by the abolitionists have been consigned to a last resting-place on library shelves, it is possible to see more clearly and impartially: it is certain that some of the charges brought against slave-shippers and owners in the heat of conflict were unfounded; and while endeavouring to ascertain the facts, it is well to disregard the wild rhetoric which was so abundant during the days of Wilberforce in England and Channing in America.

---

[1] The whole bearing of the lower classes of Slavs towards their masters, and the habits of centuries of serfdom, still leave a cringing reverence in the heart of the debased peasant, that in many ways it would be difficult to distinguish from the relation of the negro slave to his proprietor.

The Slave Trade in Africa.

Primarily it is necessary to guard against the idea that the negro's life had been passed in a dusky paradise before the European came to Africa. Such exaggerations serve no purpose; and the lot of the slave in the West Indies and America was bad enough, without indulging in views of his primitive innocence and tender sensitiveness that are unfounded.

Slavery as such was not a new hardship in his life, since he had been accustomed to it from time immemorial in Africa. And when he came under the rule of the white man, he could not at the worst have been subjected to more cruelty, either in his capture or subsequent labour, than his ancestors who had been liable to serve black masters. The terrors of a voyage to a new and strange country, shipped with less humanity than dead mutton is now shipped from Australia to England, were indeed appalling; but it must not be forgotten that fiendish torments had always been prevalent in Africa: a victorious tribe exerted all its ingenuity in torturing its slaves. It is perhaps well for us that the curtain of oblivion has gone down for ever on those carnivals of death.

But the ghastly sights which have frequently forced themselves on the eyes of European explorers in Africa are sufficient to give some idea of the extent of the native traffic in slaves, and to convey to our minds the quality, if not the quantity, of misery it had caused from time immemorial.

Along the great slave road in Tripolitana, whither were driven year by year the thousands of unhappy prisoners who had been bought or seized further south, a traveller noticed 'on both sides the bleached bones of dead slaves, many of the skeletons still wrapped in their blue negro garments.'[1] In the Congo district another traveller found himself in the wake of a slave-raider; and although the caravan 'had passed six days previously, some of the victims, who had been left to perish, were still alive; some were tied to trees with bark cords, others were mutilated and partly torn by wild animals.'[1] A pioneer in what is now Northern Rhodesia found one district entirely uninhabited, the whole of the people 'having been killed off or driven away'; in another part 'population was very scanty, though the frequent remains of ruined villages showed that very recently this must have been a well-populated country. About the ruined villages and on the road we constantly saw human skulls and bones . . . .'[2] In another part of South Central Africa, 'a sudden raid had been organised, and every man, woman, and child who could be found was seized and tied up. Very few managed to escape; but the smiling valley, which had been known as the garden of Tanganyika, from its fertility and the industry of its people, was now silent and desolate.'[3] And in another country, where dwelt the tribes of the Mozambique, 'there was not a house to be seen, the district having been overrun by marauding tribes. It was formerly well-populated, but had now become the home of a great variety of game.'[4]

---

[1] Rohlf's *Travels.*

Such were the more evident results of African slavery at home. Whole territories were desolated and totally depopulated in every decade, as a consequence of that traffic by the aborigines in the bodies of their fellows which was a recognised and legitimate form of native industry. But these were the lesser evils of slavery in Africa.

Let us now contemplate for a moment the darker side of the picture; let us turn from the mere destruction of a village or a country by envious or ambitious neighbours, and attempt to discover the destiny of the prisoners who had been dragged from their homes to the camps of the enemy.

Some of the captives, who had the good fortune to fall into the hands of unusually humane masters, were set to work in conditions of comparative ease. Thus the traveller Barth saw the slaves in the country near Agades yoked to a plough and driven like oxen by their owners. Their lot was happy; they were probably well-fed and well-treated, since physical strength was necessary for their labour.

---

[1] Arnot, *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1889.
[2] Sharpe, *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1890.
[3] Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland.*
[4] Last, *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1887.

Others were less fortunate. On the Ivory Coast of West Africa the French traveller Binger discovered that mutinous slaves were stupefied with rum, their brains beaten out with clubs, and their bodies devoured by beasts of prey. In another instance those who rebelled were torn to pieces by their owners; and whenever a chief of the tribe to which they belonged happened to die, several slaves were killed in order that he should not lack attendants in his subsequent life elsewhere. In Dahomey the slaves were immolated by thousands at a time, and their bodies were devoured by their masters at cannibal feasts. When such festivals took place, remarked another French explorer, 'the chants were incessant, like the butcheries. The palace square gave out a pestilential odour; forty thousand negroes stationed themselves there day and night in the midst of filth. The exhalations from the blood and putrefying corpses made the air deadly.'[1]

Some of the tribes in Congola fattened their slaves for the cannibal feasts which were regularly held; and the savage custom was so engrained among the people, that the prisoners, who knew their doom, patiently waited their turn to be butchered, and seldom attempted to escape.[2] A traveller in this district noticed that many of the huts were 'surrounded by a border of skulls for at least twenty-eight yards.' During the whole of his voyage he was unable to deliver a single one of these wretched creatures reserved for food, and this despite the most liberal offers. 'It is meat,' they always replied, 'and we do not sell it.'[1]

---

[1] Lartigue, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi.*

[2] Ward, *Five Years with the Congo Cannibals.* Similar tortures took place in Mexico; they may be studied in Bancroft's *History of the Pacific States.*

Among the tribes dwelling in Portuguese West Africa the female slaves were maintained for household service, but the men were reserved as victims at the funeral ceremonies of the chiefs.[2] In the Uganda territories, where the whole population was at times reduced to a state of slavery, 'hecatombs of two thousand were butchered more than once, either in sheer wantonness or as offerings';[3] while in Northern Nigeria a British pioneer discovered the slaves and the other prisoners of a petty native tyrant incarcerated in so small a space that several 'victims were crushed to death every night.'[4]

These, then, were the conditions and methods of the African slave traffic before the Europeans came to the dark continent; and whatever may be said for or against white rule in Africa in earlier years, in the nineteenth century it has at least abolished for ever those murderous raids and hideous tortures in which every aboriginal tribe indulged its passion for adventure or cruelty and blood.

But if the slave trade in Africa was native to the soil, the slave trade which was introduced into America was entirely of European origin. It is a sad truism that the greatest of evils may at times be unconsciously caused by the best of men. The African slave trade with America indirectly owes its rise to Las Casas, the humane Spanish bishop, whose name is immortalised by the burning protests he made against the cruelty of his countrymen to the aborigines of the new world. He did not indeed exaggerate those cruelties. When Hayti was discovered by Columbus in 1492 there were about a million natives on the island. They were put to forced labour by their conquerors,

The Slave Trade in America.

---

[1] Van Gele, *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1889.
[2] Wissmann, *Proceedings*, Royal Geographical Society, 1887.
[3] Mackay of Uganda.
[4] *Geographical Journal*, 1904.

and they died. They were punished severely if their work was not satisfactory; and they died the more rapidly. The mortality was so appalling that within fifteen years their numbers had been reduced to sixty thousand; seven years later but fourteen thousand remained. The same sanguinary process was repeated in the other West Indian islands and on the South American mainland; it seemed certain that within a century the aborigines would be totally extinct.

But if the passion for wealth drove the hearts out of the conquerors, until an ounce of gold seemed well worth the price of a savage soul, Las Casas thought otherwise. Horrified at the wholesale destruction of life, he revealed in Spain itself the deeds that were disgracing the Spaniards in America. His protests were heard, and regulations were drawn up to stop the terrible abuse; but, seeing that it would be impossible to save the American Indians by any other means, Las Casas petitioned Charles v. in 1517 to grant a patent for the importation of four thousand negroes annually into the West Indies. The Emperor complied, the patent was bought by some merchants of Genoa, and the slave trade to America began.[1]

The negro proved both hardy and economical, and the export of human beings from east to west was within a few years a regular branch of commerce. At first sight there seems little difference between the traffic that Asiatics had carried on with Africa from time immemorial, and that which was now initiated by Europeans; but, although both avowedly sought wealth, and neither was particularly careful as to the manner in which it was amassed, there was a fundamental distinction between the two.

To the Asiatic who visited Africa for trading purposes the aborigines were as much an article of trade as anything else. They were equally so to the European; but the latter, even in the lowest form to which he descended, seldom forgot that it was his duty to convert the negro to his own religion. It may be granted that he had but small success. Yet, at least he made occasional endeavours; and the mere admission that the duty lay upon him to preach Christianity to the African made a considerable alteration for the better. By admitting the right of the negro to profess his, the only true religion, he acknowledged in theory, if not in fact, that his slave possessed a soul.

---

[1] In later years, when the good bishop realised the consequences of his action, he declared that he would not have given the advice for all he possessed in the world had he foreseen its evil results. Those of us who have never had reason to repent our deeds may condemn Las Casas; I cannot.

In actual daily life the doctrine was not, it is true, much respected, for the trader and the colonial planter were impatient of the limitations it imposed upon them, and the regular clergy often failed in their duty. But wherever they went, the missionary was often before them: the Jesuit had led the way, and the church sometimes existed before the trading-stations.

But at the best the traffic was both brutal and bloody; and it made little difference what European nation carried it on. The Spaniards were cut off from the West African coast, whence the slave-traders drew the greater part of their supplies, by the papal bull of Paul II., which gave all territory east of the 36th meridian of west longitude to Portugal; and Spain could therefore only supply her American possessions with slaves through the agency of Portugal, or at a later time of France or England. The contract was let to each of those countries in succession, Spain receiving from the traders a certain sum for each slave landed on Spanish American territory.

The English Slave Trade.

The English slave-trade was inaugurated by Sir John Hawkins in 1562. In that year he shipped three hundred negroes from Sierra Leone, and sold them profitably in Hayti. The success of the venture attracting attention, in the following year seven ships were placed under his command for a similar journey. It is a curious circumstance that the flag-ship was called *Jesus*: never, perhaps, was the sacred name of Him who promised rest to the weary and heavy-laden more inappropriately used.

From that time the number of Englishmen engaged in the trade gradually grew larger, and their profits were often great. The smiles of royalty were given to those who thus increased the wealth of the country; in 1618 James I. granted a charter to the merchants occupied in the Guinea slave trade; Charles I. followed suit in 1631, with a second charter; Charles II. and his successor went even further, for they took part in the traffic themselves.[1] The ports of London, Liverpool, and Bristol were now regularly occupied in the business; and during the years 1713 to 1748, when the English supplied the Spanish American colonies as well as their own plantations with slaves, the British became the chief slave-traders of the world. Even when the Spanish contract was terminated, the slave trade remained largely in British hands; in the last years of the eighteenth century, indeed, no fewer than ninety ships were regularly employed in the industry by the merchants of Liverpool alone.

Origin of the Slave.

The African slave was generally drawn from the pure negro or mixed negroid races of Central and West Africa, from the Congo basin, the unknown interior, the coast of Ashanti, or from Mozambique. More intellectual perhaps than some of the non-European races of the globe, he was still considerably lower than most of the nations of southern Africa, such as the Zulus and the Matabele. His religion, so far as we know, was that of Obeah or Vaudoux; the degrading rites of serpent-worship were carried on in the villages of Congola and Angola from which he came, and cannibalism was customary among his people.

---

[1] A share in the Africa Company is said to have been offered to Addison as a bribe. See *The Spectator*, No. 550. The forty-fifth number of that Journal contains a touching instance of the fidelity of a negro slave to his master.

His Capture.

He was kidnapped or taken in warfare by another stronger tribe, and either kept as a slave by them, or sold to the Arab or native traders, who penetrated the densest forests of the interior. In some cases there is reason to believe that he was sold by his relatives, perhaps even by his parents. He was manacled, and brought, or driven, down to the coast. Frequently he died, and was left on the way.

And Transport.

If he arrived on the coast safely, he was bought by European traders there, either singly or with others, and conveyed on board ship.[1] His destination was the West Indies, the southern colonies of British America, or any of the colonies of Latin America.

On the voyage he was herded with hundreds of other miserable creatures, in a closely confined space, without distinction of age or sex. The stench that arose was sickening. Many died on the way. On the other hand, some were born ; but their chance of survival was small. The food was scanty and of the poorest kind, generally consisting only of horsebeans and water, neither being necessarily, or even usually, of the finest quality. If danger threatened, the hatches were battened down ; and the air, always foul and rare, became putrid on such occasions. Constant moans now resounded from the unhappy cargo ; little or no attention was paid to their sufferings by the master or crew.

On occasion, still worse inhumanity was practised. In the year 1781 the slave-ship *Zong*, bound for Jamaica, was short of water. Sixty slaves had already died during the voyage ; many more were sick, and would certainly have died before they were landed. In these circumstances the captain argued with the mate that if they died a natural death the loss would fall on the owners of the vessel ; if, on the other hand, they were thrown overboard, the loss would fall on the underwriters. Perverted duty triumphed: the slaves, one hundred and thirty-seven in number, were thrown overboard, and perished. The owners claimed £30 for each slave so lost, and the claim was allowed by the law of England. And when a prosecution for murder was spoken of, it was ridiculed as 'madness; the blacks were property.'[1]

---

[1] I have seen it stated that the next voyage of the *Mayflower* immediately after landing the Pilgrim Fathers in New England was as a slave-ship trading from West Africa.

The Cost of a Slave.

Arrived at the plantations, the slave was sold for what he would fetch in the open market, as soon as he had recovered slightly from the sufferings and privations of the journey. The price varied considerably in different places, for negroes or negresses, young or old, and according to condition or strength and the demand for labour in the district. The value of a slave in British Honduras is stated to have fluctuated between $120 and $160 for newly-imported negroes, and $200 to $230 for fully-trained negroes. In Barbados a slave was worth from £20 to £25; and this was perhaps a fair average for a single head of healthy human cattle.[2]

Plantation Life.

Plantation life began. The slave, or bond-servant, as some more sensitive colonies called him, was put to labour in the fields, on the sugar, cotton, or coffee estates; or more rarely he was employed in the house of his master, the latter being a highly privileged position; and the same labour was his until he died, save in the exceptional event of his manumission being granted.

---

[1] This is probably the most extreme instance extant of that worship of property which is sometimes carried to such extravagant lengths in England, and which is still reflected in many English laws.

[2] The price of the slaves must have risen considerably during the great wars, owing to the risk of capture on the high seas; but I have unfortunately been unable to obtain any definite figures bearing on this part of the subject. It may be worth while to compare the above prices of the eighteenth-century slave with those that prevailed under the Roman Empire. According to Gibbon, a barbarian captured in warfare and sold into slavery fetched about four drachmae—about three shillings, or four times as much as an ox. This was far cheaper than any slave could ever be obtained in the West Indies. But many of the Roman slaves were educated and even learned, having been trained by their owners; these were worth hundreds of pounds. None of the negro slaves in the West Indies were ever educated by the planters, however, and their value was simply that of a field labourer or domestic servant.

He was generally well fed and adequately clothed and housed; in this respect at least his condition was not worse than it had been in Africa as a free man, and far better than it would have been as a slave among his own people. His weekly ration was some places calculated at five pounds of pork, seven pounds of flour, with sugar and tobacco. He was often allowed a holiday on one day a week, generally the Saturday; and some indulgent masters granted their slaves three weeks additional holiday at Christmas.[1] These concessions, however, depended on the colony, the crop, and more especially upon the individual slave-owner.

Contradictory Evidence.

It is here that the difficulty begins for those who wish to reconstruct a general picture of slave life. Each colony had its own statutes, which often varied considerably from those of its neighbours. Each master had his own individuality, which could frequently, although not always, override such statutes, either in the direction of indulgence or cruelty. And the evidence of eyewitnesses as to the treatment of the slaves is unsatisfactory in the extreme, so far as any general and decisive conclusion is concerned. As an example on the one hand, there is the testimony of Admiral Rodney, who knew the West Indies well, and who had no personal or pecuniary interest in the plantations or the slaves to warp his judgment. 'I have often been in the West Indies,' he wrote, 'and I have often made my observations on the treatment of the negro slaves, and can aver that I never knew the least cruelty inflicted on them, but that in general they lived better than the honest day-labouring man in England.' On the other hand, there is the testimony of Labat, who saw sixty thousand English slaves 'ill-fed and hard driven; on the least symptom of insubordination killed without mercy; less cared for than those of the French and Spanish.'

---

[1] The conditions mentioned above are those which prevailed in British Honduras. They varied very considerably elsewhere, as will be noticed in the following pages.

Again, when in the middle of the nineteenth century the Abolitionists in the United States were organising their campaign against slavery by reciting the horrible cruelties that were committed by the planters on their slaves, Edward Smith, who was himself an Abolitionist, heard the slaves in the north-west of Texas state that with few exceptions they were kindly treated, not overworked, and given plenty of food, clothing, and medical attention. They were lodged in small cabins, sometimes rudely built, sometimes very neat, and situated near their master's or overlooker's house; they could accumulate property and possess small estates of their own.[1]

Against such contradictory statements, we may set the indisputable fact that the blacks in Hayti murdered every French slave-owner at the first opportunity of rebellion; and that in Jamaica there were insurrections every few years, while few of the other slave-owning colonies were immune from such risings. Curiously enough, the Spaniards were said to be the most humane masters, which is hardly credible from what is known of their treatment of the American aborigines; and the French were considered the worst. They were more grasping and more bent on becoming rich within a few years, at any cost in human life. This, again, is contrary to what one would have anticipated; for the French were generally more popular with the aborigines in other parts of the world than the Spaniards, Portuguese, or English; and that their character took on an inhumanity alien to the nation in one particular instance is difficult to believe until one has investigated the damning evidence of the cruelty of the French planters in Hayti and Martinique.

---

[1] The evidence of Edward Smith is interesting enough to quote more fully. A slave, his wife, and family occupied a cabin exclusively, unless the family was small, when two or more families lived together. The planters permitted and urged the slave to do overwork by planting a small plot of land, set apart for his use, with corn, tobacco, or other produce. This they attended to after the day's work was over, or on Sundays, when the law did not permit the master to work them. When the produce was gathered, it was sold by the planter, and the proceeds were given to the slaves. Some slaves preferred to cut wood, and all supplied themselves with vegetables from their own gardens. Many slaves thus obtained fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a year, with which they bought tea, coffee, sugar, whisky, and clothing fit for any European. In large cities, as New Orleans, they hired themselves from their masters at an agreed sum, and worked for others as they might choose, thus earning from twenty to twenty-five dollars per month for themselves. Very many slaves owned horses or land. Captain Knight of the *New World* stated he knew a slave who owned four drays and teams and seven slaves. 'They (the slaves) did not usually care to save money to buy their freedom, for the protection of their masters was an advantage to them, but there were others who had paid from one thousand to one thousand five hundred dollars for their freedom.'—O'Brien's *Rise, Progress, and Phases of Slavery* (1849).

The status of the slave, and indeed the very existence of slavery, depended on public opinion and an apparent economic necessity. We have already seen that the New England colonies discouraged, and in some cases forbade, the introduction of negroes, not because of any ethical objection to slavery—although that might be latent or subconscious in the democratic puritan character—but from a most praiseworthy desire to preserve the purity of the white race.[1] In the year 1680 there were not more than two hundred slaves in Massachusetts; a generation previously, in 1645, when a cargo of kidnapped negroes was brought to Boston, it was decided by the authorities in the colony that they should be taken back to their own country. A census of Rhode Island in 1708 showed that only four hundred and twenty-six slaves were in the settlement. Slavery never obtained any real footing in New England.

Slavery spreads in North America.

In Virginia, on the other hand, the system developed when the earlier expedient of indentured white labour was found unsatisfactory. The success of slavery in the Spanish West Indies predisposed the Virginians in its favour; but for some time the number of negroes in the colony remained small. Their first arrival is ascribed to the year 1620, when a Dutch merchant sold twenty black slaves in Jamestown. But by 1649 there were still only three hundred, and in 1661 only two thousand slaves in Virginia, while the indentured white servants were four times as numerous.

---

[1] See bk. iv. ch. v. of this work.

From the incorporation of the English Royal African Company in 1662, however, the negro population of America and the West Indies rapidly increased. The planters began to find slave labour more economical than that of rebels or the poor and destitute of their own colour. The interest of the British Crown was exerted to supply their wants, for the head of the Company was the Duke of York, and Charles II. was a large stockholder.

Numbers and Distribution of the Slaves.

It is impossible to give any exact statistics as to the growth of the negro population of the British American colonies, since no trustworthy records were kept of the arrival and purchases of the slaves at the ports, and there was no registration of the natural increase in their numbers—if any such increase occurred—within the country.[1] But a moderate estimate places their numbers at 130,000 in 1740, and at rather more than 300,000 in 1776. By the year 1860 the negro population of the United States amounted to 3,850,529.[2]

---

[1] It was proved that there was no natural increase among the Jamaican blacks—a damning fact, since the negro is more prolific than the white man; but it was cheaper for the planters to import slaves than to breed them before the abolition of the slave trade. After Emancipation the natural increase was very rapid. There seems, however, to have been some excess of births over deaths in America. The statistics, however, are not sufficiently complete to allow of any certainty.

[2] They were distributed as follows:—

Missouri,	114,931
Arkansas,	111,115
Texas,	182,566
Louisiana,	331,726
Mississippi,	436,631
Alabama,	435,080
Tennessee,	275,719
Kentucky	225,483
Florida,	61,745

In the northern states of America the few slaves that were employed were generally household servants; but apart from the repugnance shown by the people of New England to the presence of an alien race, the climate was too cold for the negro. The warmer south was his home; and pre-eminent among the southern slave colonies stood South Carolina, which was founded at the time when the importations from Africa had reached their highest point. In the year 1708, three-fifths of the population of that colony were negroes. And even in Georgia, where slavery had been 'absolutely proscribed' by its founder Oglethorpe, the system was introduced after a few years. The philanthropists and missionaries interested in the colony doubted the morality of the change; they were perhaps comforted when they were informed that the negroes were brought over 'in faith, and with the intention of conducting them to Christ.' The hypocritical excuse served its purpose. The faith produced fortunes; but I have yet to discover that the

Georgia,	462,198
S. Carolina,	402,406
N. Carolina,	331,059
W. Virginia,	12,761
Virginia,	378,104
Maryland,	87,189
Delaware,	1,798
New Jersey,	18

—From *The Crisis of Emancipation in America.*

The following table, which gives the growth of population in N. Carolina, shows the large increase of the negro element.

	Whites.	Free-Coloured.	Slaves.
1790,	288,204	4,975	100,572
1800,	337,764	7,043	133.296
1810,	376,410	10,266	168,824
1820,	419,200	14,612	205,017
1830,	472,823	19,534	245,601
1840,	484,870	22,732	245,817
1850,	553,028	27,463	288,548
1860,	629,942	30,463	331,059

In 1860 there were 34,658 slave-holders in N. Carolina, and 331,059 slaves, an average of 9·6 to each owner; in Virginia it was 9·4, and in S. Carolina 15·0.

Georgian slaves possessed any other religion than that of compulsory hard work.

The general course of the slave trade was little different in the West Indies. As early as the year 1503 some few Africans had been shipped across the Atlantic to the Spanish possessions in the West; but so far as the British West Indian islands were concerned, indentured white labour remained for long the chief resource of the planters. A more or less regular stream of white immigrants of low character was directed from Britain to the West Indies, as also to Virginia and Maryland; and the agents in England who induced or compelled those unlucky persons to emigrate were not always particular as to the means they took of securing their end. Sometimes, indeed, they were charged by anxious or exasperated relatives with the export of unruly or idle apprentices, who left their country for their country's good; occasionally they went so far as to kidnap and tranship their victims by force. At times the hook had to be baited by the promise of wealth; the device was generally successful, but the promise hardly ever came true. And a civil rising or disturbance at home always resulted in the despatch of a large contingent of rebels to the West Indies; at one period 'to barbadoes' a man was a current figure of speech for expelling him.[1]

It is hardly astonishing that such labour was extremely unsatisfactory on the plantations. The proprietor of an estate had often to become a gaoler as well as an agriculturist; and the two occupations did not harmonise. The negro was more docile, and cheaper in the end; and the real slavery of the blacks quickly drove out the pseudo-slavery of the indentured whites. From 1662, when the Royal African

---

[1] The 'white niggers' of Barbados, a race of fishermen, who consider themselves as the aristocracy of labour on the island, are supposed by some to be descendants of the men transportod thither by Cromwell. Dr. Widdup informs me that they are unhealthy-looking people, with crisp hair, and probably with a strain of negro blood in their veins.

Company was established, until 1807, when the slave trade was abolished, the traffic in negroes from West Africa to the West Indies was large, continuous, and profitable; for some years during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, indeed, it is calculated that 57,000 slaves were annually shipped across the Atlantic.

In any case, Jamaica became the western capital of the slave trade; and to Kingston in Jamaica the negroes were brought before being sold and distributed among the other West Indian islands and the slave-owning colonies of North and South America. It is stated that in the course of a century 2,130,000 slaves were transported to the West Indies; and, apart from those sold elsewhere, there were in the year 1833 nearly 700,000 resident slaves in the British West Indian colonies alone.[1]

The market at times appears to have become overstocked. Some occasional protests indeed there were at the continually increasing importations of negroes, just as in

---

[1] The following is a summary of the British West Indian population in the year 1833. It is necessary to state that in some cases the figures are obviously only approximate:—

	Whites.	Free-Coloured.	Slaves.
Antigua, . .	1,370	3,020	29,537
Barbados, . .	5,029	4,326	81,500
Dominica, . .	791	4,077	15,392
Grenada, . .	2,154	2,450	23,614
Jamaica, . .	17,000	30,152	322,421
Montserrat, . .	331	814	6,262
Nevis, . . .	700	2,000	9,142
St. Kitts, . .	1,612	3,000	19,085
St. Lucia, . .	866	2,828	13,348
St. Vincent, . .	1,301	2,824	22,997
Tobago, . .	285	1,195	12,091
Tortola, etc., .	477	1,296	5,399
Anguilla, . .	365	327	2,388
Trinidad, . .	3,683	16,302	23,776
Bahamas, . .	4,240	2,991	9,705
Bermudas, . .	4,181	1,068	4,371
Demerara, . .	3,006	6,360	65,556
Berbice, . .	523	1,161	20,645
	47,914	86,191	697,229

England there seem always to have been a few men who thought the traffic criminal. White labour was not hastily abandoned everywhere. In South Carolina laws were made at one time offering bounties to indentured white labourers who would come over,[1] and a duty of £40 per head was imposed on all imported negroes. But the former proved unsatisfactory, and the latter was vetoed by the British Government. The other colonies occasionally made laws of the same kind; but anything that tended to hamper the slave trade was disallowed by the imperial authorities on the protests of the shipowners and merchants at home, who reaped a rich harvest from the traffic.

Enactments relating to Slavery: 1. In America.

The colonies therefore were restricted to laws affecting the condition of the slaves within their own borders. But in whatever sense such laws might be drawn, whether in favour of the master or of the slave, the verdict would almost invariably be in favour of the former. The judge would be a white man; the jury, if there was a jury, would likewise be white; and whatever else they might do, however impartial they might be among themselves, they would not go against their own colour. In practical working, although he might be hedged about with the circumstance of the law, the master was an almost absolute autocrat in dealing with his slave. And the latter was not allowed to give evidence on his own behalf.

The presence of so great a number of negroes in the different colonies made various enactments necessary. If we turn to the vast variety of laws made by the British colonial legislatures, we shall discover some indications of the light in which the planters regarded their slaves, albeit none of the light in which the slaves regarded the planters. For the latter we have to search the records of the negro rebellions.

---

[1] The lot of the indentured white labourer was not always a happy one. In the *Historical Manuscripts Commission* (*Hodgkin MSS.*, 1897) there is a letter, dated 21st April 1775, from one Samuel Freeman, indentured for four years' service to a small planter in Maryland. 'In the passage I was treated very genteelly by the captain, and wanted for nothing. (After landing) I was sold, contrary to my expectation, to a planter up in the country about 14 miles from any town, for four years for £30 for my passage, where I am treated more like a dog than a Christian.' But complaints are so common among a certain class of wastrel emigrants that one must be chary of accepting such evidence without independent confirmation. I have seen a letter from an English artisan grumbling at the lack of workhouses in New Zealand; and the early settlers in Virginia uttered similar regrets (vol. i. bk. i. ch. vi.).

The necessity of keeping the white race pure and distinct from the negro was recognised in the southern colonies of North America as well as in New England. Thus in both Virginia and Maryland mixed marriages were forbidden at an early date; and the statutes of this character were frequently added to. In 1691 a law was made enacting that, if any white woman had a child by a negro, she must pay £15, or in default be sold to slavery for five years. The code of Maryland was still more severe. Miscegenation of any kind was forbidden in that colony. A free man, whether black or white, who had connection with a woman of an opposite race became a slave for seven years; if a free black woman had a child by a man of her own race, she reverted to a state of slavery. Similar laws were made by most of the English colonies: in Massachusetts, for instance, it was enacted in 1705 that no Christian was to marry either a negro or a mulato; the minister who officiated at any such function was fined £50. If a negro had intercourse with a white woman, both were flogged, and the man was banished.

The intention of such laws was excellent. But it was almost impossible to carry them out, save in New England, where they were little needed. In the southern colonies white women were scarce, but human nature remained strong; the call of sex was rarely resisted, when its gratification was easy and seldom dangerous. The planter was in most cases practically a despot in his own plantation; and the more intimate details of life in his household were necessarily unknown to curious friends or officials when the nearest neighbour might be twenty miles away.

Mixed marriages, indeed, were extremely rare; but their rarity was certainly less attributable to the restraining power of the laws than to social prejudices, and especially to the fact that the planters could obtain that which they desired without going through the ceremony of matrimony. In Virginia in the year 1637 a white man did public penance for having intercourse with a negress; but an easier code of morals soon prevailed when slavery dominated the southern colonies. It does not appear that the negresses resented the embraces of their masters; on the contrary, they often accepted as a singular honour the concubinage which they were unable to refuse. It is easy to believe that the dusky mistress of a planter was accorded privileges above the rest of her sex who remained in slavery; and although the decay of her charms may have caused her rejection in favour of a younger rival, she seldom sank back into the common ruck, especially if she had borne children to her owner.[1]

The enactments relating to the personal privileges or restrictions of the slaves in America were at first few in comparison with those in the West Indies; and they appear to indicate that punitive discipline was rather a matter for the individual planter than for the colonial courts. But the statute-books give occasional indications of the trend of public opinion that are not without value.

In Maryland, for instance, an act was passed in 1715 forbidding any negro to go three miles without a pass, or to carry a gun beyond the limit of his master's estate. In Massachusetts, it was enacted in 1703 that no slave, whether negro, mulato, or redskin, was to be out at night, except on a special errand; infringement of this law was punished by flogging. In the same colony a negro assaulting a white man was flogged; in Connecticut the penalty was limited to thirty stripes. In Massachusetts all imported slaves were to be registered, each under a penalty of £50 for omission—a measure which indicates the extreme importance attached by the legislature of that colony to the problem of controlling the immigration of race-aliens. Had similar steps been taken in other colonies, the study of the history of slavery would not be the incomplete and unsatisfactory subject that it unfortunately is at present.

---

[1] The scandalous case of one Kate Delaney of Guiana attracted much attention. She was the daughter of a French colonel and a free black woman, and was therefore not a slave. Born in 1765 and well educated in England, she was sold against her will by a rascally ship's captain to a planter in Guiana. She lived with the planter as his mistress until his marriage to another woman, when she was again sold by her master to another planter. To the latter she bore two children: he married, and sold her to a third planter, to whom she also bore two children. The wretched chattel was eventually freed, probably because her charms had begun to decay and she was of no further marketable value.

The laws were rendered more stringent in later years, when the growing demand for cotton in the spinning-mills of England led to an enormous extension of the cotton plantations in America, especially in Carolina; the consequent increase in the number of slaves made more detailed enactments necessary. There was a whole code of slave laws in force in North Carolina and several other southern states; and the provisions of these laws throw considerable light on the general status, the many restrictions, and the occasional privileges of the slaves in America.

A slave put on trial for his life in North Carolina was granted in 1818 the right of a freeman to challenge the jury; in 1834 this was extended, and the slave was given the right to defend himself against murderous attacks by his master or overseer. It is highly significant that such a law was necessary.

As regards runaway slaves, it was enacted in 1779 that to steal or seduce away a slave was a capital felony; anybody convicted of aiding a runaway to escape was to pay £100 to the owner, in addition to the damages incurred. Four years later it was declared to be a capital felony for a ship's captain to take, or allow others to take, a slave out of the state without the written consent of his master. Between 1825 and 1833 three laws were passed, the substance of which was to make the stealing of a slave, with the purpose of sending him out of the state, or aiding him to escape, a felony punishable by death. Ordinary cases of persuading a slave to run away, or of harbouring runaways, were punished by making the persuading party pay the owner $100 and damages, with a liability to pay a fine of $100 more, and, furthermore, on indictment to pay a third sum of $100, and imprisonment for not more than six months.

The right of the slave to hunt was now likewise prohibited; but the fact that he had been allowed to do so previously indicates some degree of personal liberty.[1] Anybody finding a slave hunting might take the gun for his own use; and, furthermore, might carry the slave to the nearest constable, who should inflict twenty stripes on the bare back. In 1779 it was enacted that any slaves found absent from their master's plantation on a Sunday were to be arrested, unless they had passes, or were in the company of a white man. If they were thus found without permission, the patrolman might inflict not more than fifteen lashes; in case the negro was insolent while being whipped, he might be further punished, the punishment not to exceed thirty-nine stripes in all. It must be remembered that the patrolman was the sole judge of the negro's insolence.

In the same year it was decided that a saloon-keeper who entertained slaves against their master's will should forfeit his licence; and in 1794 that no person should permit any negro, bond or free, to meet on his property, for drinking or dancing, under penalty of £10. These restrictions were in many cases justifiable on the ground of maintaining good order and public decency.

It was likewise forbidden for any slave to trade with any person without his master's written consent, the article in which he dealt being expressly specified. A whole series of laws between 1826 and 1833 enumerated the articles which slaves might not sell without their master's permission—goods raised on the farm, tools, food, supplies, staves, cloth, and gold and silver bullion. Most of these articles could be, and often were, stolen from the plantation stores.

---

[1] As does also the fact that in Texas he was allowed to buy his time from his master, and sell his labour in the open market to anybody else. It was the smaller and meaner employers who chiefly availed themselves of this law.

Other persons were forbidden to sell anything at all to slaves; provided, however, that this should not hold when slaves traded with the written permission of their masters between sunrise and sunset, Sundays excepted; this proviso not to apply to the sale of liquors, arms, and ammunition, unless for the master's own use. Shipmasters were forbidden to entertain negroes or mulatos on board ship between certain hours, or on Sunday. Negroes violating this law were presumed to be disposing of stolen goods.

In 1774 it was enacted that any person wilfully killing a slave was to be imprisoned a year for the first offence, and to suffer death for a repetition of the offence. In 1791 the law was strengthened to read that any person convicted of maliciously killing a slave should on the first conviction be held guilty of murder, and 'suffer the same punishment as if he had killed a freeman.' It is more than doubtful, however, whether a white jury would convict a white man under this law, except in a very extreme case.[1]

Enactments relating to Slavery: 2. The West Indies.

Among the several British possessions in the West Indies, the condition of the negro slaves varied considerably according to the personal character of their masters and the laws which were passed to regulate their conduct and privileges from time to time.

Some masters recommended methods of kindness which to others appeared altogether unnecessary. 'You should smile upon your slaves,' advised one such benevolent owner, 'shake them by the hand, give them snuff, and gratify their little wants, for they are particularly attentive to the looks and behaviour of the persons into whose hands they fall.'[1] That the slaves were not ungrateful for such kindness was shown again and again, when timely warning was given to the planters of intended insurrections on their estates. It must have been gratitude of no common order which induced a negro to betray his people in order to save his master. And a touching instance is recorded of the devotion of a negro who, seeing his owner in danger of being shot during one of the interminable Maroon Wars of Jamaica, threw himself in front that his own body might intercept the bullet.

---

[1] It is stated in Hodgson's *Letters* (1824) that the planters of South Carolina so often shot their slaves that no notice was taken of it. The case is mentioned of a planter who wished his slaves to work at night as well as by day, and stood over them with a gun to see that they fulfilled their appointed tasks. But on one occasion he fell asleep; the slaves seized his gun, shot him dead, and then burnt his body. Several examples of cruelty to slaves are mentioned by Dickens in *American Notes*.

In such cases—and they were many—the slaves had been treated very indulgently: they were frequently allowed some degree of personal familiarity by their master, and they stood in no awe of him so long as they performed their arduous, but not excessive, tasks. Under these conditions, some of the slaves were able to save money, which their children were allowed to inherit; occasionally they even possessed slaves of their own.

But there were bad masters as well as good in the West Indies; and there were those who were worse even than bad masters—the absentee proprietors, who lived in England, and allowed an agent to administer their estates. Those agents attempted to squeeze the last pound of sugar out of the soil, and the last ounce of labour out of the slaves; they showed no consideration, they ruled by fear, and they drove the luckless creatures under them by brute force.

The smaller and less wealthy proprietors were notoriously worse masters than the large planters; the agents of the absentee owners were worse than the small proprietors; but by common consent the worst employers of all were those negroes, free or still in a state of partial slavery, who had themselves become the owners of slaves, and who hired out those slaves of slaves as day-labourers on other men's estates. The lot of these wretched creatures was miserable indeed.

---

[1] *The Management of Negro Slaves*, by a Professional Planter (1803).

Each island in the British West Indies had its own laws concerning the treatment of its slaves; but a general likeness underlay the whole system, with the exception that the colonies administered directly by the Crown were usually less harsh in their regulations than those which were ruled by chartered companies.

Punishments were frequently arbitrary and altogether unchecked. In Jamaica, for instance, a master or manager, at his caprice, might inflict on any negro, man, woman, or child, thirty-nine lashes of the cartwhip without being bound to assign a reason for the act. In Barbados there was no limit to the number of lashes; in all the other islands, except Tobago, Grenada, and St. Kitts, the law was the same as in Jamaica. In Grenada and St. Kitts, the master was limited to twenty-five lashes; in Tobago, to twenty lashes.

But it is certain that these limits were frequently exceeded, for in none of the islands was there any system of recording or reporting the punishments inflicted; in none could the slave protest, or his evidence be accepted in a court of law; in none would a jury of slave-owners convict a fellow slave-owner for having inflicted a few lashes more than the statute allowed.

When the punishment was inflicted, the slave was stretched prone on the ground, and he received on his bare body the number of lashes that were thought necessary to purge his offence. In none of the islands was the flogging of female slaves forbidden.

In several of the West Indian colonies, no slave was permitted to acquire property by law, except for the benefit of his master; nor could he claim redress for injuries inflicted upon him, except through his master. By the favour of his master, the slave sometimes acquired possessions which were not recognised as his at law; legally the property of the slave belonged to his master. Should the slave be deprived of this property, he could not personally seek redress; but his master, as the legal owner both of the slave and of the slave's property, might bring an action on his behalf, although he was not compelled to do so. The master, in fact, had an absolute right over the persons and the possessions of his slaves.

In the island of Trinidad, which was acquired considerably later than the other British West Indian colonies, and at a time when a large body of public opinion in England was beginning to discuss the whole question of the rights and wrongs of the slaves, better conditions prevailed. The use of the driving whip in the fields was prohibited; the flogging of female slaves was abolished entirely. Not more than twenty-five lashes could be inflicted on any male slave, and it was ordered that twenty-four hours should elapse between the crime and the punishment—a proviso to secure that no penalties should be inflicted from mere passionate anger. A record was to be kept of all punishments above three lashes.

If the punishment was excessive, the slave had the right of complaint before a magistrate. Should he prove his case, the master might be fined, at the discretion of the magistrate, a sum not exceeding £10. Should the complaint be adjudged untrue—or unproven, which was in effect the same thing as its being untrue—the slave was returned to his master, who then had the right to inflict twenty-five lashes; or, if the latter thought higher punishment was necessary, he could refer the case to a superior tribunal. It may be believed that few slaves thought it wise to exercise the dangerous right of convicting their masters.

Before the year 1824 no slave in Trinidad could give evidence in a court of law. After that time he was allowed to give evidence, if he could obtain a certificate of competence from any clergyman or other religious teacher; but among the twenty-three thousand slaves on the island, only four slaves obtained such certificates in two years.

One of the cruellest features connected with the slave trade lay in the fact that husband, wife, and children were liable to be separated from each other when they were transferred to a different owner. It is true that the more humane masters endeavoured to prevent such occurrences, by refusing either to buy or sell the male slave apart from his wife or children; but less thoughtful owners ignored the practice, and the slave merchants who disposed of the new cargoes from West Africa disregarded it altogether, since it tended to diminish their profits.

There are, however, some evidences that attempts were made to stop this scandal by law, especially during the later years of slavery in the West Indies. In St. Lucia it was forbidden to sell slaves who were to be separated from their families, whether by private, voluntary, or judicial process of sale. In Trinidad, the separation of families was forbidden and a register was ordered to be kept, in which were entered both the regular and recognised marriages among the slaves, and the reputed marriages, as well as of the offspring of such unions.

But in most of the other islands the question was left entirely to public opinion and the individual action of the slave-owners; and public opinion in the West Indies was seldom strongly expressed in this matter until the anti-slavery agitation in England had gained considerable force. Had there been any widespread feeling against the separation of the slave from his wife and family, more regulations would have been enforced, for the West Indian laws were merely the expression of opinion of the ruling class of white planters.

On the whole, the English slave-owners were more remiss in this matter than the Spaniards.[1]

Such were the leading laws relating to slavery in America and the British West Indies. Several of those laws may have been wise. Many of them were doubtless necessary. Some were even designed to safeguard the interests of the slaves themselves against their masters. And the objection that justice was not tempered with mercy in these enactments can hardly be urged, since that idea was not understood as yet even in Europe.

But it is only when we turn to the treatment of the negro slaves in the French West Indies that we realise the relative mildness of British rule in the neighbouring islands.

Slavery in the French West Indies.

The life of the slave in the French Antilles was hard and heavy. He could be flogged or tortured by his master for the most petty of offences, and he had no redress. The usual number of strokes inflicted was twenty-nine; but not until 1786 was it forbidden to give more than fifty.

During punishment the slave was generally fastened to four stakes in the ground, sometimes to a ladder, sometimes suspended by his four limbs. The whips were of hide or pliant twigs; and to avoid inflammation or gangrene, lemon juice, salt, or pepper was rubbed in the wounds.

At times the slave was made to wear an iron collar, with his hands and feet fastened behind; a gag rubbed with pepper was put in his mouth, or he might be nailed by the ear, and the ear then cut off.[2] The latter punishment was only enforced when the theft amounted to more than 100 ℔s. of sugar; for less serious offences the slave was whipped at his master's discretion. If an ox or a horse were stolen, the owner could cut off the leg of the slave; on a repetition of the crime the slave might be hanged. For stealing smaller animals the negro was whipped and branded.

---

[1] The Spanish colonial law on this subject was as follows. 'Slaves are not to be hindered from marrying with slaves of other masters. If the estates are distant from one another, so that the newly married couple cannot fulfil the object of marriage, the wife shall follow her husband, whose master shall buy her at a fair valuation by appraisement. And if the master of the husband does not agree, the master of the wife shall have the same facility.' The Spanish slave code was more lenient than that of any other nation; but it was very often disregarded in practice.

[2] A curious anecdote is preserved of a slave who, having already had one ear cut off, begged that the other might be spared, as he would have nowhere to put his cigarette.

On occasion the slave was condemned to wear a tin mask to prevent him from eating the sugar cane, and he was compelled to drag a block of wood wherever he went for minor offences. In Martinique the slave who struck his master was put to death. The same penalty applied to the theft of a boat, which was generally committed by a runaway; after 1743, however, the law was modified. Henceforth, if the thief was a negro, his left leg was cut off; if a negress she was branded and lost her nose. At Port au Prince, robbers (voleurs) was branded with the letters VOL, or if condemned to the galleys with GAL.

Some actual punishments may be cited. In Martinique, five negroes were condemned for murder. They were to do penance, their hands were cut off, they were drawn and quartered by four horses, their limbs cast on the fire, their ashes given to the wind, and their heads exposed on posts opposite the place where the crime was committed.[1]

In 1741 it was ordained by the Council of Leogane that negro assassins should do penance at the church door, in a shirt, with a rope round their neck, and a candle in their hand. They were conveyed in a tumbril used for carrying filth, on which was the inscription, 'Slaves, assassins of their masters.' They had to ask pardon of God, their king, and of justice. Their right hands were cut off, and they were taken to a public place, where the chief assassin had his thighs, arms, and calves burnt with a red-hot iron; into each wound was poured molten lead. He was then cast alive—if he remained alive—

---

[1] It must be remembered that similar punishment had been inflicted on European murderers in Europe not long before.

on the fire, and his ashes thrown to the winds. His accomplices were first broken on the wheel, and then burnt. An alternative punishment was that the negro should be branded, have his breasts pinched with red-hot pincers, and finally be burnt alive.

Still more exquisite tortures were devised and executed by the artists in such matters. A militia lieutenant pulled out all the upper teeth in the jaw of one slave ; he made incisions in the sides of another, and poured therein hot lard. A woman burned with a lighted brand the private parts of one of her female slaves. A more recognised form was to bind the slave in a nude condition to a stake near an ant-hill ; then, having rubbed him with sugar, to pour ants over him from head to foot, making them enter every crevice of the body. Others were bound naked to stakes in places that were infested with mosquitoes ; others, again, had strips of red-hot iron fastened to the sole of the feet, to the ankles, and the insteps. These were renewed every hour by the executioner.[1]

---

[1] The executioners appointed were slaves condemned to death, and reprieved on the strength of accepting the office. A case is cited in which a negro, after consenting to become executioner, preferred to be executed. He declared this fact at the time that he should have executed another negro, who was condemned to be hanged and strangled. Negresses had a chance of commutation of punishment by marrying the executioner, if the parties so desired. They usually preferred to remain slaves instead. The following is a summary of the punishments which could be inflicted by the executioner, with the rate of payment he received :—

Hanging,	30	livres.
Breaking on the wheel,	60	,,
Burning alive,	60	,,
Hanging and burning,	35	,,
Cutting off the wrist,	2	,,
Dragging and hanging corpse,	35	,,
Torturing to the utmost,	15	,,
Torturing mildly,	7-10	sols.
Penance,	10	,,
Hamstringing and branding,	15	,,
Whipping,	5	,,
Pillory,	3	,,
Executing in effigy,	10	,,
Cutting out the tongue,	6	,,
Piercing the tongue,	5	,,
Cutting off the ears and branding,	5	,,

In another case, a woman took a negro girl out of gaol, locked her up, and beat her. The next day she fastened her victim, face downwards, to three stakes, and beat her again. Then, aided by an accomplice, she spread gunpowder on the back and stomach of the wretched creature, meanwhile piling canes on top. A lighted torch set fire to the girl, who rolled in agony; the tormentor put her foot upon the back of the agonised captive, 'so that her stomach was able to bear the fire.' One can hardly be surprised that, when such practices were in use, a negress should have been found to entreat a man of her own race to cut off her head with a bill-hook after she had drunk a bottle of tafia, since she could no longer bear the cruelties to which she was subjected.

Such deeds were those of devils, not of men. Yet in few cases was punishment inflicted; and even then, only a small fine was imposed, or in one or two very exceptional instances, banishment. But the cruelty which could enjoy the infliction of these hellish tortures went far to excuse, if not to justify, the excesses of the negroes when their opportunity came.

The Anti-Slavery Agitation.

But some knowledge of these horrors reached Europe; and, in an age which was slowly beginning to believe in 'the rights of man,' the terrible cruelties inflicted by the slave-traders and the slave-owners on their helpless victims touched a chord in the hearts of the humane that did not cease to vibrate until the hand of the oppressor was stayed. But the path of reform was long, and it was beset with many difficulties. The English merchants who were engaged in the slave-trade were wealthy and powerful; their allies, the West-Indian planters, were likewise possessed of great riches and of considerable social and parliamentary influence.

Nor did they appeal to the forces of cupidity alone. Many people honestly regarded the institution of slavery as essential to the maintenance of some of the most important colonies of the Empire, while several of the planters, who had always treated their slaves well, were justifiably indignant at the exaggerated language of abuse in which they were too often assailed.

And the public conscience was hard to rouse, and even the law was uncertain. In the reign of William III., Sir John Holt, the then Chief-Justice of England, had decided that any slave who entered the country became a free man by virtue of his entry into a realm where slavery did not exist. 'One may be a villein in England,' ran the decision, 'but not a slave.' But in time the judgment fell into abeyance, and runaway negroes who took refuge in Britain were openly advertised for as slaves. and rewards offered for their recovery, in the newspapers of the day. In 1729, however, a further decision was given by the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, to the effect that 'slaves become free by their being in England, or by being baptized.' Ten years later this judgment was reversed, and the whole question now fell into the background. In the great struggle between France and Britain for the possession of America and the West Indies the subject of negro freedom was practically forgotten.[1]

Meanwhile the slave trade went on. A constant supply of labour was necessary for the plantations, and, since the area under cultivation grew larger and the market for tropical produce expanded, more slaves were required. The one hopeful sign of an advancing public opinion came from America, where in the year 1754 the Quakers of Pennsylvania protested against the institution of slavery, and gave practical effect to their protest by liberating some of their own slaves.

At length the question again came to the fore in England. In the year 1765 one Granville Sharp,[2] an official in the Royal

---

[1] '"A negro has a soul, an' please your honour," said the corporal doubtingly to Uncle Toby,' when Tristram Shandy still was young; but honest Trim on this point at least was much ahead of most of his contemporaries, for Sterne's romance was published in 1759.

[2] See Prince Hoare's *Memoirs of Granville Sharp*, 1820; also Clarkson's *History of Slavery*, a useful but by no means adequate work. Sharp belonged to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and he was one of the founders of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Ordnance Office, befriended a destitute negro whose owner had abandoned him in London. Once he had come to the assistance of the wretched creature, Sharp refused to return him to his master; but the master was not content thus to lose the slave whom he had cut adrift. An action at law was brought against Sharp for illegally detaining the property of another; and although he protested that slavery did not exist in England, and that therefore one human being could not be recognised as the property of another, some of the greatest lawyers of the day, including Blackstone, held the contrary view. In face of the decision of 1739, which had reversed the celebrated ruling of Chief-Justice Holt, they were forced to admit that the law of England recognised slavery.

But Granville Sharp, to his lasting honour, remained unconvinced; and henceforth the question of slavery became the ruling passion of his life. He was neither a wealthy nor a leisured man; but he now devoted the greater part of his energies and time to a study of the condition of the slave trade and the law relating to slavery. That study and its profoundly important consequences occupied the remainder of his years.

The slave trade itself was not abolished until a few years before Sharp's death in 1813; the law on the subject was definitely settled within the next decade. On 22nd June 1772, in deciding the case of the runaway negro slave James Sommersett,[1] the ruling was given by Lord Mansfield that 'as soon as any slaye sets his foot on English ground he becomes free.'

That decision was final. From that day slavery was a condition of human existence unknown to the law of England; henceforth Britain was not only a land in which equal freedom was secured to black and white alike, but a land the very contact with whose soil was sufficient to confer freedom on the man or woman who had been considered, and was still considered, a slave or bond-servant in any other country of the world. The ardent patriot and lover of liberty may well be forgiven if he has at times imagined that there was something sacred in the very earth of England, when it could confer such boons on the oppressed.

---

[1] There are many pamphlets relating to the Sommersett case in the British Museum.

This definite repudiation of slavery was an inspiring moment in our history, which moved the poet and the idealist to envision a moment when the universal triumph of liberty should be assured; but the immediate practical results of the decision were small. It is true that it enunciated a principle of the first importance. Yet that principle applied only to England; it did not change the laws relating to slaves and slavery in a single British colony by so much as a comma. And there were not many negroes in England, whether bond or free; while none of the slaves on the West Indian plantations had any opportunity of making an escape to the one country where their fetters would have been struck off.

The success of Granville Sharp and those few associates who were now combining with him to protest against the iniquities of the slave-traders and the slave-owners was therefore at first very limited and incomplete; but that fact merely stimulated them to more strenuous efforts on behalf of the helpless unhappy negroes. The hateful institution of slavery was no longer recognised in England; it now became the hope and the steadfast aim of Sharp and his friends to see it abolished, not merely in every part of the British Empire, but in every part of the world. In that long struggle few of them wearied, and none betrayed the noble cause; but not many of the original agitators lived to see the extinction of slavery within the empire; none lived to see its final abandonment by a world whose baser elements even yet cling stolidly to the evil customs of darker days.

The times were indeed propitious to the movement against slavery and the slave trade. The heroic age of liberty was dawning, the age when men dared and suffered much for the goddess of their desires, the goddess whose priceless favours are denied the weak and the irresolute. It was an epoch of optimism and revolt; the old rules of life were thrust scornfully aside, and men trod boldly the untried paths, confident that their expectations of a better future were no delusive mirage but a prevision of the truth.

In such an age, when freedom struck hard as with the magic sword Excalibur, the spirit of the New Humanity, instinct with its passionate sympathy for the poor and feeble, the downtrodden and the oppressed, made its solemn appeal to the hearts of men. And not in vain. Many showed themselves ready to fight for others, as they would have fought for themselves; strangers though they were in race and blood, in colour and tongue, in creed and culture, they felt none of these barriers in the great enthusiasm for those whom they considered their brothers in the flesh, their equals before the great Creator of all mankind.[1]

But if the enthusiasm was boundless, the difficulties may well have seemed insuperable. Slavery was a recognised institution in the West Indies and in America. Vast sums had been sunk in the plantations, and a considerable amount of British capital was invested in the slave trade between West Africa and the tropical colonies. Both interests were powerful; to attack them both at once would risk a double failure. In these circumstances, the little band of men who soon became known as Abolitionists, wisely decided to postpone the general attack on slavery as an institution until they had suppressed the slave trade and its horrors of kidnapping, of pestilent overcrowding on the voyage, of buying and selling in the markets of Jamaica and South America. The traffic in human beings must be stopped before the greater work of emancipating the negro could be undertaken.

---

[1] For the rise and influence of the new humanitarian school in England, see vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. i.

The first phase of the campaign lasted thirty years. In 1776 a resolution was moved in Parliament that 'the slave trade is contrary to the laws of God and the rights of men.' The resolution was not carried; the Imperial Civil War had broken out, and 'the rights of men' was a more popular phrase among the rebels across the Atlantic than in the Parliament dominated by Lord North and the 'king's friends.'

For the time, therefore, the agitation failed; but the cause of the Abolitionists made steady progress, and the greatest statesmen of the day were soon numbered among its supporters. The matchless oratory of Edmund Burke, the uncertain yet splendid eloquence of Charles James Fox, and, more important than both, the colder yet clearer vision of the younger Pitt, all added to the force of the campaign against the slave trade; and against these could be set nothing save the abuse of every shipping merchant in Bristol and Liverpool who had an interest in the slave traffic, and the protests of the planters who foresaw a shortage of labour on their estates.

But far more valuable to the abolitionist movement than the united sympathies of Pitt, Fox, and Burke was the support which it now obtained from William Wilberforce. Burke's influence in the House of Commons was steadily declining. The erratic genius of Fox was squandered on a thousand causes and concentrated on none. Pitt was immersed in the pressing business of the state, and confronted with a European crisis that had not ceased even at his death; the Tory Premier had neither the strength nor the time to take a leading part in the abolitionist agitation. But Wilberforce, a man who was justly held in high regard in both the professedly religious and the less orthodox social circles of the day, threw himself into the anti-slavery movement with an energy and a devotion that in the end wore down every obstacle.

Under his auspices, a Society for the Abolition of the Slave

Trade was formed in 1787; henceforth unremitting activity was shown. Wilberforce himself moved twelve resolutions condemning the slave trade in the House of Commons in 1789; these were rejected, but in 1791 a Bill was introduced to prohibit the further importation of slaves into the West Indies. Pitt and Fox both supported the measure; but in spite of a moving appeal—'Half this guilty traffic has been conducted by British subjects; as we have been great in crime, let us be great in repentance'—the Bill was lost by a majority of seventy-five. In the following year, however, a Bill to suppress the trade was carried in the Commons, but rejected in the Upper House; a similar measure, introduced in 1796, suffered a similar fate.

But the rejection by Parliament only increased the popular demand for the abolition of the traffic. The agitation had spread through England; hundreds of public meetings were held; protests were made—in one year alone 517 petitions were addressed to Parliament—and 300,000 persons pledged themselves to abstain from the use of slave-grown sugar until the abolitionist cause had triumphed.

The Slave Trade Abolished, 1807.

The demand grew too strong to be resisted; and early in the year 1807 a Bill prohibiting the transport of slaves passed both Houses of Parliament. On 25th March of the same year it received the royal assent; from 1st March 1808, when the new law came into force, it was decreed that no slaves whatever should be landed in any British colony or carried in any British ship.

The scandalous traffic in human beings was thus prohibited by Britain. Other nations followed suit in condemning a trade that was fast becoming repugnant to the whole civilised world; one or two states—notably Austria, France, and Denmark—had already forbidden it. The United States, too, had suppressed the slave trade a few days before the British Act was passed; the law of prohibition was approved by Congress on 2nd March 1807.

But for some years yet the evil work continued, albeit in diminishing degree. It was found necessary to strengthen the English law by making the traffic in slaves a felony punishable by transportation; and although this penalty practically destroyed the British slaving ships, the negro slaves were still sent from West Africa to the South American plantations and the Spanish West Indian colonies. So great was the traffic, indeed, that during the five years ending with 1849, no less than 65,000 slaves were annually landed in Brazil; during the fifteen years prior to 1835, the importation into Cuba was 40,000 annually; while in the decade ending in 1839 the British naval squadron that was charged with the suppression of the traffic captured 333 slave vessels; in the subsequent decade it captured no fewer than 744 of those terrible ships.[1] Yet even so late as the year 1860 it is stated that 40,000 slaves were landed in the island of Cuba alone; in many other parts of the tropics the inhuman traffic was only kept under by unremitting vigilance. In this work of policing the seas and the foul places of the earth the British took a leading part, whether in chasing the slavers on the Atlantic and Indian Oceans,[2] or in suppressing the slave-raiders in the interior of Africa; and they may thus claim to have done their utmost to wipe out their original blood-guiltiness as the greatest of the slave-trading nations.

Slave Emancipation.

But long before the slave trade had finally expired in dark dishonour, the Abolitionists of England had turned their attention to the second phase of the problem, the emancipation of the negro. It was soon found that the Abolition Act of 1807 had not altogether benefited the slaves in the plantations; in some respects, in fact, it had rendered their position still more painful. Those who were now smuggled through from West Africa were subject to yet worse overcrowding than in the old days when the traffic was recognised by law. Those who were now engaged on the sugar estates were often treated with less consideration by their owners; the discontent increased, and dangerous insurrections grew in number. In every case the rebel slaves were eventually subdued; but in the more serious outbreaks it sometimes seemed probable that the English planters would share the fate of the French in Hayti, where the victorious blacks had revenged themselves for a century of brutality by torturing and massacring their late owners.[1]

---

[1] Evidence given before Mr. Hutt's Committee.

[2] For slavery in the Indian Ocean, see bk. xv.

These facts were not overlooked in England. Many thoughtful men were convinced that the abolition of slavery as an institution must follow the abolition of the slave trade as a branch of commerce; and within a few years a definite agitation had been started to put an end to slavery within the bounds of the British Empire. In the year 1823 an Anti-Slavery Association was formed, under the auspices of those who had led the previous movement against the slave trade; and it was soon evident that the sympathy of the nation was again ready to espouse the cause of humanity and freedom. Funds were easily forthcoming to support the work of the Abolitionists; pamphlets, sermons, and speeches roused the conscience of the people and touched the public mind with their enthusiasm: the idea found favour and progressed rapidly.

The planters as a class were not popular in England, where men were already beginning to impute to them all the evils for which the system of slavery was responsible, and to credit even the best of them with the abuses and cruelties that were at most rare and perhaps even exceptional cases; but the leaders of the Abolitionist movement were at first by no means extravagant in their demands.

---

[1] That they were capable of doing so was shown during the rebellion of 1794 against the Dutch and English planters of Guiana. In that case the negroes cut their prisoners in pieces and tied their heads and quartered bodies to the trunks and branches of trees. The whites were even more savage. When the negroes were defeated, they were broken on the wheel; the ringleaders were burnt at the stake, and their flesh pinched out by redhot tongs. The smell of burning made many people sick.

The first shot of the campaign against slavery was fired in the House of Commons on 15th May 1823, when Fowell Buxton, an ardent advocate of emancipation, brought forward a motion 'that the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.' The resolution failed, very largely through the opposition of Canning, who, though he wished the condition of the slaves to be improved, reminded the Abolitionists that they must consider the safety of the colonies, and urged that it would certainly be dangerous, and might possibly be disastrous, to the great West Indian interests to emancipate the negroes.

It was generally recognised that there was much force in the objection, and indeed the Abolitionists themselves did not yet ask for immediate emancipation. The prospect of freeing the slaves raised, in fact, a far more formidable problem than the contest over the slave trade had done. The prohibition of the slave trade had merely forced the planters to breed their slaves in the West Indies instead of importing them from West Africa; and although the change had added somewhat to the cost of production and to the trouble of managing an estate, it had not proved a serious embarrassment. The abolition of slavery, on the other hand, was certain to change profoundly, if not altogether to subvert, the social and economic condition of the tropical colonies, whose industries had been built up and maintained by slave labour. The theory that the freed negro labourers would work as well and as regularly as the negro slaves was scouted by every planter and every manager of a sugar estate, and in this matter they did not exaggerate.[1] It was evident, too, that the free negro must be paid a regular wage for his labour, instead of being bought outright and labouring the rest of his life for the mere cost of his keep; and that change must inevitably cause a rise in the price of West Indian produce and the probable bankruptcy of the smaller employers.

The more extreme antagonists of the Abolitionists prophesied the immediate ruin of every tropical plantation if emancipation were determined on, and although their view was palpably extravagant, it was not denied that there was some foundation for the fears that were expressed. It was likewise difficult to resist the contention that, since the slaves had always been and still were recognised as the property of their masters, since, too, they had been openly bought in the colonial slave market without any thought of their future liberation, emancipation would be in effect a gigantic confiscation of property.

The Abolitionists had no sympathy with the doctrine, of which so much had been heard a generation back during the Revolution in France, that such confiscation was justifiable, and they were therefore faced with the necessity of compensating the slave-owners for the loss of their slaves. But apart from the extreme difficulty if not impossibility of fixing a price which should be agreed upon between the planters and themselves, the cost of compensation, even on a moderate basis, would be enormous. It is true that Britain was wealthy. But the country had not yet recovered from the strain of the Napoleonic wars, there was much distress at home, and many pressing reforms were being urged. And there are limits to the amount which the most generous of nations will pay for the satisfaction of its conscience.

But the planters received every suggestion, not merely for the abolition of slavery but for bettering the condition of their slaves, with a furious resentment and unreason that went far to ruin their case. Implacable opposition was natural in men whose livelihood was threatened; the gross abuse with which they chose to assail the Abolitionists reacted on their own heads, and did much to produce that prejudice against the colonists of every province of the Empire which had so bad an effect in later years in England.[1]

---

[1] The author of *Antigua and the Antiguans* states that on some estates in that island more acres were cultivated after Emancipation than before, and that some of the planters considered free negroes easier to manage than slaves. If that is true, their experience was altogether exceptional, and it is contradicted by the great bulk of evidence.

A Jamaican commission refused to revise the slave code of the island, on the ground that it was 'as complete in all its enactments, as the nature of the circumstances would permit, to render the slave population as happy and comfortable in every respect as the labouring class in any part of the world.' Seeing that they also refused to prohibit the use of the cattle whip in the field or the flogging of negro women, it was evident how little value they attached to the happiness and comfort of their slaves.

Some of the planters predicted the loss of Jamaica if emancipation were forced upon them, and asked the Imperial Parliament to 'become the lawful owner of their property by purchase, and they would retire from the island.' The sarcasm was lost on the Abolitionists; but the public opinion of England was more readily moved by the refusal of the planters to extend civil rights to their baptized slaves, and by their intense enmity to the missionaries who were working among the negroes on the sugar estates.

It must be admitted that the efforts of the missionaries were sometimes injudicious, and their influence on the slaves may occasionally even have been harmful. They were often uneducated men, who were utterly incapable of understanding the character of the negroes, and when they preached the Christian doctrine that all men are equal before their Creator, it is not unlikely that their hearers interpreted them to mean that all men should be equal, irrespective of race or colour, upon earth. Such a doctrine must have tended to subvert that strict discipline which the planters found it necessary to maintain among their slaves; and there is evidence to show that the missionaries were indirectly responsible for some of the discontent and perhaps even for some of the insurrections among the negroes.

---

[1] See bk. xvi. ch. ii.

Be that as it may, the planters had hated the missionaries from the beginning; the missionaries not unnaturally returned their hate with that cordial enmity which is far from unknown among Christians. And every outrage and abuse which the planters committed on the negroes was reported by the missionaries to their employers at the headquarters of the great Christian missions at home; these anecdotes, which lost nothing in the telling, did much to influence opinion against the white aristocracy in the West Indies.

But apart from this, more than sufficient evidence that could not be contradicted was available against the planters. There was the case of a white man who had chained down a negro girl of nine years old and forcibly ravished her; he was tried for rape, but acquitted by the white magistrates of Jamaica on the ground that the girl was a chattel and her evidence therefore could not be heard in a court of law. Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely; the reverse side of the case, where the planters had shown kindness to their slaves and protected them against ill-usage, was far less conspicuous.

The knowledge of these facts soon roused an intense feeling of righteous indignation in England, and the demand for immediate emancipation gained strength every day. The practical inconveniences and dangers of abolishing slavery were disregarded, the great expense was not unwillingly borne. In the year 1828 a small beginning was made by raising the free coloured population of the West Indies to a legal equality with the whites; in 1833 the great Emancipation Act became law.

The provisions of the Act, which was finally passed on 28th August 1833, and which was to apply from 1st August 1834, declared that all children born after that time should be born free; all children under six years of age at the time should at once be freed. All the other slaves in any British colony were henceforth to be considered as apprentices; they were to work for their masters during twelve years if they were field labourers, and for seven years if domestic servants.

The Emancipation Act, 1833.

The number of slaves who were thus liberated was computed to be 770,280; the enormous sum of twenty millions sterling was to be paid by the British Government to the slave-owners in compensation. The price of ransom was therefore not ungenerous, and probably fully equal to the amount which the planters had originally paid for their slaves in the market. It could not, of course, compensate the planters for the subsequent loss in the working of their estates, nor did it recognise any other contingent damages.

Of this amount Jamaica received over six millions sterling; British Guiana received for 84,915 slaves the sum of £4,297,117, 10s. 6d., an average of £50, 12s. 1d. for each slave; the other slave-owning colonies received proportionate amounts. Yet the planters complained notwithstanding that the compensation was inadequate; the wealth of the whole world would not have satisfied them for the loss of their slaves. Another complaint concerned the delay in the distribution of the funds; but here there was some reason for adverse comment.[1]

A more legitimate form of criticism concerned the competence of the Imperial Parliament to override the local colonial legislatures. Only after the most violent protests, couched in the most undignified language, would the latter recognise the Emancipation Act; and their consent was mainly due to a sense of their relative weakness and the overpowering strength of the imperial authorities. Had the British West Indies been a united federation in 1834, instead of a number of petty and divided colonies, with no machinery or sentiment of co-operation, their opposition would certainly have been more prolonged and even more bitter; and had the old slave-owning colonies in North America not revolted in the year 1776, the action of the Abolitionists would certainly have split the empire sixty years later, as in fact it led directly to civil war in the United States in 1861. It is easy to justify the emancipation of the slaves on humanitarian grounds. But in the purely constitutional aspect of the question there was no more and no less justification for the intervention of the imperial authorities in the internal affairs of the West Indian colonies in 1834 than for their intervention in the internal affairs of Massachusetts and Virginia in 1766.

---

[1] The South African slave-owners were swindled of part of the compensation money by rascally agents. See vol. vi.

Emancipation Day, 1st August 1834.

The day of emancipation was awaited in the West Indies and in British South America with grave forebodings by the whites and with unbounded joy by the blacks. In most of the colonies a public holiday was proclaimed to celebrate the abolition of slavery: the missionaries impressed upon their charges the necessity of keeping the great occasion as a religious festival; all the chapels were open, and every negro was exhorted to attend a service of thanksgiving for the past and of prayer for the future. Many of the blacks, who had become sincere and fervent believers in Christianity, obeyed the summons of their pastors with alacrity, and prepared to thank the beneficent Deity that had sent them liberty as a gift from heaven. Their faith in the new creed was easily justified; had it not given them a boon which their own gods had ever denied?

When the regular hours of labour ceased on the plantations on the evening of 31st July, the last day of slavery had come to an end; but the negroes were still the legal property of their masters until the morrow.

The grand moment of emancipation was now eagerly expected. On that memorable evening hundreds of the blacks, in every slave-owning colony, made their way to the hills, where they kept watch patiently through the tropical night, waiting for the earliest rays of the sun whose rising should proclaim the glorious dawn of freedom for the negro subjects of the empire.

Black figures kept watch through black hours of dead night; but a living thought suffused the hearts of the slaves as they turned expectantly eastwards. The golden signal of liberty was rushing over the waters which they or their fathers had painfully crossed; the birth of the new sun and the death of the old bondage could not be delayed.

But who shall say what other emotions crowded the breasts of the slaves as they awaited the fiery light that should burst over the horizon with its silent yet splendid message of emancipation; what were their hopes of the brighter future that stretched out before them; who shall say what gods were saluted, or what foul spectres of torture, the whip, the thong, the stake and the dungeon, took flight to darker lands as the night progressed and the stars sank to their setting in the sea? There is no key to the secrets of those hours; the angel of liberty passed over watching crowds, but the joyous music of their hearts has perished. . . .

The morning sun arose, and singing and dancing, the uncouth yet pathetic melodies of the negroes on the plantations were heard. Glad hymns came from the chapels; the missionaries preached the lesson of good tidings to large and radiant congregations. A few disturbances occurred, but these were insignificant and local in the West Indies; in British Guiana more serious outbreaks took place, a riot which might have spread to a general rebellion was suppressed, and the ringleaders were hanged before order could be restored. Apart from this, the epochal day passed without incident.

General Abolition of Slavery.

Slavery was thus abolished in the British Empire; it continued yet another generation in the United States, and the number of the slaves employed on the southern plantations of the republic increased enormously, from 697,897 in 1790 to 4,002,996 in 1860. But many of the proprietors and estate-owners had long recognised the evils of the system;[1] and during the protracted and bloody second civil war, which broke out in the year 1861, slavery was officially abolished in the United States on 18th December 1862. Eight years later, in February 1870, the negro population was given full equality of citizenship with the whites.

A few years more, and slavery was everywhere becoming extinct. The institution was abolished in the Dutch West Indies on 1st July 1863. After 1871 it was gradually uprooted in Brazil. A new Portuguese law forbade it in the Lusitanian possessions after 1876; and though it continued a surreptitious existence in those colonies, its power to work evil was limited.[2] Energetic measures were taken by the British, French, and Germans to stop the slave-trade in the interior and on the coast of Africa; and as the partition of the dark continent among the European nations continued, the slave-dealer's occupation became more dangerous and less profitable.

---

[1] Jefferson disliked the system, and Washington left instructions that his slaves should be liberated after his death. Many other examples will occur to students of the period.

[2] That slavery continued in the Portuguese colonies was shown by Mr. Butt's investigations in St. Thomé, Principe, and Angola; the accounts were published in the London newspapers on 9th October 1908. 'At times,' he reported, 'the hand [of the labourer] is beaten with a thick, flat, circular piece of wood, with a handle known as a "palmatoria"; in more serious cases a strip of hide, known as a "chicotte," is sometimes used; occasionally a thong of thick rubber. . . . What are laws and decrees compared with the proximity of a chicotte? . . . Of the compulsory character of the enlistment there can be no doubt. The labourers sent go against their will. No offer of payment would induce them to separate themselves from their homes and families to work, without hope of return, on the plantations. It is indisputable that great numbers of them are brought as captives hundreds of miles from the interior, and that shackles are very extensively used to restrain them, at any rate at night.' See also the evidence given in the libel action, Cadbury *v.* the London *Standard*, December 1909.

The traffic in human beings had existed for centuries in Africa before the coming of the white man. The participation of Europeans lasted some four hundred years; but the efforts that were now put forward to abolish a condition of society which had become repugnant to the advancing conscience of civilisation made some amends for the horrors previously committed in the cause of commerce, and but too frequently under the cloak and with the sanction of Christianity itself.

The work of the Abolitionists was done: the slave was free. The negro could now walk the earth as other men: he was free to compete with the whites in science, in art, in literature, in commerce; he could sometimes even become a priest of their churches, a member of their legislatures, a magistrate of their courts, a participator in their sport.[1] And if the old social barriers between race and race still remained too strong to be lightly broken, he could join a free community of his own people, in Liberia, in Sierra Leone, or in Hayti.

Those communities had been aided by missionaries and philanthropists in their early days. The Abolitionists and religious societies had assisted the negroes with money and advice; others were benevolently indifferent, ready to be convinced, but not very optimistic of success. But as year succeeded year, and little advance was shown, and in some cases a retrograde movement was even visible,[2] interest declined when failure seemed inevitable. The negro republics began with a plentiful supply of good wishes and an excellent constitutional theory. It is a pity that those commodities do not suffice to make a nation.

---

[1] Cricket, which has been called the national game of England, has been adopted with enthusiasm by the negroes. Several examples are given in that most delightful and most accurate of all historical works, Wisden's *Cricketers' Annual*, of negro cricketers whose play would merit their inclusion in almost any eleven.

[2] In Hayti, for instance. That island, which was once the most prosperous of the West Indies, has steadily deteriorated under negro rule. The estates under cultivation have decreased year by year; it is now little more than a wilderness of deserted plantations. Its capital is uncared-for and unkempt. And the place has degenerated spiritually as well as materially. Catholicism is still professed as the nominal religion of the

Results of Emancipation.

But if Emancipation did not at once effect all that had been anticipated, if many of its warmest advocates were disappointed at the apparent poverty of its results, it was at least the birth of a new chivalry in the world, as noble as any of an older time. It proved that the strong recognised their duty to the weak. It elevated the slave from his debasement even as the advance of civilisation had elevated woman. And in both cases the process is necessarily slow and gradual.

The grossness and brutality of the early Middle Ages had changed imperceptibly into the fantastic refinements of the romantic centuries that preceded the Renascence, into the mystic and magnificent adoration of a Dante for his Beatrice, before reaching the higher, because truer, modern ideal of a spiritual equality that can yet derive its inspiration from physical differences and specialised functions. The realisation of that ideal is not indeed yet complete. It has taken centuries to advance thus far; even to-day it is only in English-speaking lands and in western Europe that the theory reaches so high, while the practice still falls far behind.

But true development that will stand the test of time is never hasty; a reform must become the very stuff of our thought, it must permeate the lowest of those human atoms that comprise our world, before it is free from the danger of reaction. And therefore that new chivalry towards the negro races, which gave them freedom, and may yet give

people; but in place of the sweet and comforting doctrines of Christianity they have revived as their real faith the grossest and foulest superstitions of Dahomey and the Congo. The altars of the churches are still lit with candles and prayers are still addressed to the Virgin; but Vandoux-worship is rampant, and the 'goat without horns'—a human being—is an acceptable sacrifice to their horrid gods.

them a knowledge of its value, together with the perception that freedom itself can only be maintained when it is worthily used, need not be too hastily condemned because its immediate results seem tardy and poor.

The whites cannot indeed draw back from their dominance, and the world is irrevocably in the hands of Europe. We jostle each other overmuch, and our earth is small. And despite the decrees of democracy, numbers are not the supreme test of power; only thought, and its dynamo intellect, determine the ultimate mastery. Nature is too ruthless to grant any indulgence to lack of brain power; the stern justice of her rule, which has extinguished many races, makes no exception in favour of the negro. He may increase and multiply in every continent; but he cannot compete with the white. No force can compensate for the thousands of years that the negro has lost; he cannot step into the heritage that the white man has carved out for himself in the sweat and toil of many generations.

Against that stern fiat there can be no rebellion. The sad truth is again dawning, that there is no real equality of man; the religion that tells us so is a dream of the past, the socialism that tells us so is but another dream of the future. Old theories have faded in the light of fuller knowledge; some there are indeed that still cling to them as to their sheet-anchor; but that is the true courage which faces reality. The spirit which stands by the old shibboleths unknowingly courts failure.

The Need for Racial Co-operation.

The question comes unbidden—what of the future? The negroes were slaves in the centuries that have gone; to-day they are servants: but to-morrow? Masters they can never be: if the moral progress of the past suffers no break in time to come, they will never again be slaves. They cannot return to the old isolation; and stagnation means death. A race advances and conquers; it recedes or stands still, and is lost.

The negro increases faster than the white, but numbers alone count for little; if ever it came to a deadly racial conflict there are only the more to be slaughtered. The mind sickens as it looks down that avenue of thought, and sees the fathomless abyss at the end.

But gradually the world seems to rise above the rude creed of slavery and oppression. Wild outbreaks of crime there still are; the savage blood of his ancestors yet lurks in the descendants of the American slave. The pent-up desire for revenge bursts forth at times; terrible outrages in Carolina and Louisiana help us to realise what must have been the early instincts of the race in Africa, what oppression they must have suffered during three centuries in another land, and how galling is the present emancipation that concedes the letter, but not the spirit, of freedom. But lynch law, however natural its barbaric vengeance, does nothing to cure that disease. Insanity laughs at death till death draws near; and such revenge but degrades the white man to the level of the irresponsible being whom he slaughters.

Sometimes, indeed, it seems that the present position of the negro is less satisfactory than in the days when he was bought and sold with the other chattels of an estate. Then, if he had many sorrows, he had few cares. The first result of independence is not to lighten the one, but to increase the other.

But, in fact, his advance has already been considerable,[1] particularly in the West Indies, where a class of negro agriculturists has come into existence whose success has fulfilled many of the hopes of the Abolitionists, and fully justified the tremendous experiment of Emancipation.

---

[1] See, however, the opinion of Colonel F. G. Ruffin, an American authority, who declared in the Richmond *Despatch* of 21st September 1890, that it was impossible 'to educate the coloured people. Their industrial condition, their criminal record, their social, moral and religious state, all show that freedom is a disadvantage to them: that they are worse in all these particulars than before the war (of 1861) and are deteriorating every day. The negro is incapable of receiving what white men call religion and education, and he is worse after professing to have received them than before.' I disagree emphatically, and I note that Sir Harry Johnston, who has a profound knowledge of the negro problem, is optimistic as to the future.

Yet however far the negro may advance, white and black can never unite; the natural barrier of colour is impassable. There can be no further mixture without damage to both; and the dismal results that one sees in half-breed and mulato do not encourage further experiments.[1] A healthy aversion, however, on the side of the white, if not on that of the negro, saves us from much danger; that way, at least, the door is barred.

But co-operation in many matters should not be impossible; and on these lines—since experience has shown that the negro can do nothing to advance himself without the active help of the white, since he owes his new-found freedom to Europe, and the stranger has conferred a gift which his own people have denied—the future progress of the blacks must develop. Without that co-operation there will be stagnation, if not an actual return to the old barbarism.

---

[1] The novelist Dumas was a mulato, a quadroon. But one swallow does not make a summer.

Probably, however, the failure of the mulato is partly due to the fact that he has generally been regarded as an outcast by both black and white in English communities.

Book XIV

THE AFRICAN TROPICS: 1808-1910

CHAPTER I

THE WEST AFRICAN SETTLEMENTS: 1808-1900[1]

European Settlements in Africa.

During three centuries five European nations had possessed territory in Africa. The first modern discoverers of the continent, the Portuguese, who were entitled by papal bull to its sole possession, had founded stations on the Congo, in Angola, and along the east coast. The Dutch had established themselves at Cape Town and on the west coast. The French and English dis-

---

[1] Authorities.—Beyond the annual and other valuable publications of the Colonial Office the literature is ample. Lukach's *Sierra Leone*; Ingham's *Sierra Leone after a Hundred Years*; Rankin's *White Man's Grave*; Walker's *Church Missions in Sierra Leone*; and C. B. Wallis's *The Advance of our West African Empire*. A. R. Ellis's *History of the Gold Coast*; Bowdich's *Mission to Ashanti*; Dupuis's *Journal of a Residence in Ashanti*; Ricketts's *Narrative of the Ashantee War*, 1831. For Fernando Po and the Kamerun, Johnston's *George Grenfell and the Congo*; Underhill's *Life of Alfred Saker*; and Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*.

Concerning Nigeria, there is much recent literature dealing with the Hausas and their early history, a good deal of which appears to me to rest on rather shaky ground; but Lady Lugard's *Tropical Dependency* is excellent, and several valuable papers on the subject, which lies rather outside the scope of this work, will be found in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*. Mockler-Ferryman's *British Nigeria* is the most comprehensive work for the whole country: it should be supplemented by Payne's *Table of Events in Yoruba History*. The earlier travellers who throw light on this region are Barbot and Grazilhier, *Account of the Kingdom of Benin*, 1699; Mungo Park's *Travels*; Denham's *Narrative of Travels*, 1822-24; Clapperton's *Journal of an Expedition*, 1829; Lander's *Voyage down the Dark River*, 1832; Laird's *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior*, 1837; Allen's *Narrative of the 1841 Expedition* (1848), puted the ownership of the slave and gold depots of Guinea. And Spain came into possession of the island of Fernando Po and a strip of the Biafran shore.[1]

European Ignorance of Africa.

But such coastal stations postulated no knowledge of the interior; and when the nineteenth century opened Africa as a whole still remained unknown to Europe. The Portuguese had indeed explored a little of the south, and penetrated to the ruins of the settlements of an older race in Mashonaland. But the rapid decline of the nation which had produced Albuquerque and Vasco da Gama confined their later operations to a precarious foothold on the shores of the continent; Portuguese authority in Africa henceforth hardly reached beyond the Portuguese forts. The Dutch, it is true, made several expeditions into the interior of what is now Cape Colony; but not many of the settlers at Cape Town had shown any desire to adventure inland. The French were as yet scarcely more enterprising; the waning energies of Spain were fully occupied in the two Americas. And the English, after their one disastrous attempt to penetrate the interior of Sudan from the Gambia in the year 1620,[2] also confined themselves to the commerce of the coast until the formation of an African Association in London in 1788 led to the explorations of Mungo Park, a young Scot of twenty-four at the time of his first journey through Africa, and the worthy forerunner of a host of followers in the same great field.

But the discoveries of Mungo Park inaugurated a century of incessant exploration that gradually filled the blank map

---

and Macwilliam's *Medical History of the Expedition*, 1843; Richardson's *Narrative of a Mission*, 1853; Barth's *Travels and Discoveries*, an important work, 1857.

Three good books of general interest are Burton's *To the Gold Coast for Gold*; Mary Kingsley's delightful *Travels in West Africa*; and Hazzledine's *The White Man in Nigeria*.

[1] The Danes and Brandenburgers also had stations on the West Coast; but these were of no political importance, and were eventually abandoned.

[2] See bk. xiii. ch. ii.

of Africa with strange names of towns and rivers, of great lakes and barbaric kingdoms, from Zambesi and Zanzibar to Atlantic and Cape Verde. Mungo Park himself began his work in 1795 by travelling from Gambia across the unknown interior in search of the Niger, the great stream which had been known by name and rumour to Europe since the time of Ptolemy, but which had never yet been looked upon by any European. A predecessor had already failed in the same quest; and it hardly seemed at first that Park would be more successful. He was insulted, he was robbed, he was imprisoned on the way by the savage tribes which he encountered; but he pressed on undaunted during seven months of constant danger and difficulty, until at last, on 21st July 1796, he saw the ample waters of the stream he sought. Even now he still pushed forward, hoping to discover and enter the famous trading centre of Timbuktu, whose wealth and population were not diminished by fable and report; but this success was denied by jealous fortune, and after an unavailing struggle the pioneer in inland West Africa was forced to retrace his steps towards the Gambia.

The Exploration of Africa, 1795-1900.

A second journey in 1805 over the same ground carried Park nearer to the city of his desires. But this time fortune struck a crueller blow; for he sailed past Timbuktu on his way along the Niger, but could not enter; and lower down the stream which he had hoped to navigate to its mouth two thousand miles away, he and his party of explorers, now sadly diminished by sickness and desertion, were attacked and slain by savages.

Park's fate was that of many who followed in his steps. Disease and distrust were the potent enemies of white travellers in wild tropic lands; the most careful foresight could not guard against the former, and neither force nor conciliation was always available or useful against the latter.

But danger is no deterrent to the true explorer, and from the beginning of the nineteenth century there was never a year when some white man was not forcing his way through the dense forests, navigating the great streams, or traversing the deserts of Africa. The work of David Livingstone in the south, of Speke and Baker in the east, of Stanley in the far interior, of French, German, and other British travellers of lesser name in the Sahara and Sudan, changed the whole conception of the continent in Europe in two generations. It was no longer possible to think of Africa as one vast desert when Speke had described the beauty and fertility of Uganda, when Stanley had followed the vast length of the Congo, and found it bordered by the overwhelming vegetation of the equator; and it soon became evident that a change was at hand in the dealings of Europe with its giant neighbour.

The Partition of Africa, 1870-1900.

The dark continent was no longer despised and neglected when some knowledge of the enormous extent of its resources was revealed to the outer world. Hurried attempts were now made to secure territory and trade in every part of Africa; and while two European peoples were struggling for the mastery of the south during a long age of strife, the older European settlements in tropic latitudes were enlarged by annexation and conquest, until all but one or two of the aboriginal tribes of the interior were brought under the domination of the whites.

The compelling national and economic forces which made every European power again enter into competition for the possession of oversea territory[1] sealed the political fate of Africa during the last thirty years of the Victorian age; and what had been at most a few isolated coastal forts or insignificant trading stations at the mouth of some great river were expanded, within the brief space of one generation, into vast provinces whose millions of dusky inhabitants owed obedience to rulers of whose very name and country they were utterly ignorant.

---

[1] The expansionist movement in Europe is discussed in bk. xvi. ch. ii.

In this astonishingly rapid transformation of a whole continent Britain took her full share, as she had taken far more than her share in the work of exploration; France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium added largely to their possessions; while Spain and Portugal, the original pioneers of African discovery and conquest four centuries before, were now little more than passive onlookers at the expansion of their modern rivals.

The cynic and the humanitarian might well agree that the most striking feature in this wholesale division of territory lay in the fact that the partition of the African continent was accomplished without a European war.[1] They might dispute whether nations had become more sensible or less grasping in their dealings with one another; but neither could pretend to doubt that the results of European rule had latterly become in many, perhaps in most cases, beneficial to the African aborigines themselves.

Improvement in European Administration.

Various views have been held as to the duty of the superior to the inferior race, of the European conqueror to the non-European conquered. It has been maintained that the conqueror owes no duty to the conquered; that he is not called upon to safeguard them from the dangers introduced by his coming, or from the excesses of his own people, or from the consequences of their own ignorance and errors. If they prosper, runs this argument, then they prosper; if they die, then they die: it is none of the conqueror's business in either case. But the advocates of this theory, which is simply the negation of human sentiment by brute force, have generally taken good care that the aborigines with whom they have come into contact have not prospered but died; that the ground was soon cleared for themselves.

The first three hundred years of the European connection with Africa had furnished sufficient illustration of the practical working of this argument, when the white man sank nearly to the level of the black, as both took part in the horrible profits of the slave trade. The nineteenth century, on the other hand, saw the evil traffic prohibited, and as far as possible suppressed, by the whites. It saw also the concurrent development of a new sense of moral and political responsibility towards the natives on the part of European administrators, which did much to blot out the mistakes or crimes of their predecessors. And when the century closed, a fairer prospect than Africa and its people had ever known was dawning upon the dark continent; the long night of ignorance and disease was nearly at an end; the day of knowledge and sanitation was at hand. If the trained mind and keen intelligence of white governors had replaced the capricious massacres and tortures of a negro despot, the medical men of Europe, educated in the new school of tropical medicine, were also beginning to supersede the native witch-doctor and the aboriginal medicine-man, whose charms and curses and potions had been the one form of treatment for physical and mental maladies alike.[1]

---

[1] Except the Turko-Italian War of 1911.

There were still, indeed, many lapses from the ideal of a just, humane, and firm administration, which should at once develop the country and advance the people. Unsavoury scandals at times came to light; the administrator sometimes became the trader, the trader sometimes became the swindler, and the European who was sent to protect might be discovered to be oppressing those entrusted to his control. The sexual morals of the white man, too, were not necessarily more perfect in the tropics than in the temperate zone; and difficulties, disturbances, and misunderstandings rather than injustice sometimes arose from lust for the native women that seldom developed into love.[2]

---

[1] See ch. iv. of this book.

[2] A case in British East Africa in 1908 obtained some notoriety. It was commented on in the English press, particularly in a good article in

But these lapses tended to become less frequent. And Africa may indeed be thankful that the full knowledge of her resources did not dawn upon Europe, and the day of her development and conquest by alien masters did not begin, until the practice of slavery had been forbidden as intolerable by the conquerors.

Christianity in West Africa.

The epochal event in the moral history of the African continent was the abolition of the slave trade by the British in 1807. It had already been abolished by the French, their chief rivals in West Africa, in 1794; but the French traffic in slaves was far smaller than that of the British. And from the day that Britain declared the slave trade illegal, the navy of England was engaged in the noble task of suppressing the traffic on the high seas; similar attempts, unhappily for some time less successful, were made to suppress it in the interior; while at the same time a band of English philanthropists, among whom William Wilberforce was the most conspicuous figure, did their utmost to redress the balance of evil which Europe had brought to Africa, by sending out missionaries to sow the merciful seed of Christ among the vast negro population that had been bought and sold in the open market for the American and West Indian plantations.

A courageous attempt was now made to spread Christianity in West Africa. Wherever the statesman and soldier went the missionary generally preceded them; and although the missionaries often failed, although their methods were not always wise,[1] and their teaching frequently proved less at-

---

the *Spectator*. I need not reproduce details of a scandal which the curious in such matters can find for themselves.

But some of these illicit black and white unions were happy. A Governor of Sierra Leone once put up a handsome memorial to his native mistress who had died in childbirth, and commanded due honours to be paid to the funeral procession. The righteous were scandalised, probably because the Governor felt his loss too much to disguise his grief.

[1] The Moravian missionaries, for instance, translated the Bible into 'pidgin English,' the *lingua franca* which is universally understood along the West Coast. The result was so horribly yet comically profane that

tractive than the guns and gin of the white trader, their influence was wholly for good.[1]

It cannot indeed be claimed that the form of religion which took root on the West Coast as the result of their ministrations was of a very high type. Many converts were certainly made. They were always zealous; they were often sincere, and they were sometimes extravagantly pious and inordinately proud of their piety. But their faith was more fervent than deep; and it may be doubted whether many of them understood much of the creed which they professed with such conviction.

They certainly added nothing to its beauty. No negro Francis preached to the birds of the tropical forests; no new Augustine sprang from the soil of Africa with a vision of the kingdom of God; the records of Bantu Christianity know no fiery Tertullian, no saintly Anselm, no dauntless Xavier. The creed which the black brethren of Wilberforce adopted was often superstitious and occasionally ridiculous. But those who hold that the palest reflection, the most distant shadow, of the Cross is preferable to the gross and bloody rites which had prevailed in the dark continent for innumerable generations may be convinced that the apostles of West African Christianity did not lay down their lives in vain.

And there were many lives lost among the missionaries in that fatal land. Sierra Leone, the headquarters of evangelistic effort, played indeed a double part in history. It was the spoilt child of the Protestant philanthropists of

---

the book had to be suppressed. As an example, it may be mentioned that the common West African native expression for one of the Christian sacraments was 'God-chop-stick,' which could not but be offensive to European ears, although not in the least irreverent to the aborigines.

[1] Critics of the missions often stated that the negro converts were frequently liars, hypocrites, even thieves. But even in England one has heard of professing and respected Christians who lacked some of the simpler virtues; and if the unfortunate fact that a deacon has stood in the dock or a churchwarden has been convicted of crime hardly proves that religion has failed in our own country, neither do similar accusations against negro Christianity prove that the missionaries worked in vain.

England; it was also the shuttlecock of death. The Gold Coast and Nigeria were hardly less unhealthy. All three proved, in fact, what some had doubted, that Protestant missionaries could be as zealous and heroic in spreading their faith as the apostles of the older form of Christianity; for the troubles which they encountered in their work were enough to daunt the stoutest heart. Apart from the intellectual problem of explaining the creed of Europe, the difficult doctrine of the Trinity and the harsh logic of predestination, to the less subtle negro mind, the missionaries had to face the ever-present physical problem of keeping their bodily health; and the uninstructed tribes to whom they preached may well have marvelled that the Deity whom the white men served with such devotion was not more ready to protect His servants from disease and death. Few of the evangelists survived their novitiate for long; and West Africa achieved a melancholy reputation as a veritable shadow of death to the soldiers of the Cross. 'The bravest and the best,' says a missionary chronicle of the time, 'came but to die.'

A Native Priesthood Established.

Heroic as were these servants of the Church, it would have been impossible permanently to maintain a sufficient number of missionaries to replace those who had fallen in the fight; and the mortality in the ranks was directly responsible for a change in ecclesiastical polity, since it was determined on that account that the Christian natives of the colony should henceforth be eligible for the priesthood. The step was somewhat hazardous; for despite the doctrine that all men were equal before Christ, the practical objection that negro Christianity had sometimes assumed grotesque and barbarous forms in the West Indies could not be denied.

But the risk of corruption was less than the risk that Christianity should die out altogether; and in 1843 Samuel Adjai Crowther, the first native of West Africa to be ordained a priest of the Church of England under the new scheme, was admitted into holy orders by the Bishop of London.[1] Thirty years earlier Crowther had been kidnapped as a slave, in the last days of slave-trading; twenty-one years later he was consecrated a bishop of the Church of England in West Africa.

His consecration was eloquent of the new spirit that had come over the Anglican Church of recent years, and the wider outlook that now characterised its clergy. Until near the close of the eighteenth century the Church of England had been an insular establishment; nor could it be greatly blamed for its insularity. For the statesmen who had planned the reformed Church of England under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. had assuredly not foreseen the British Empire. The Church they designed was designed for England only; and even for England it had not altogether sufficed, as the numbers and prosperity of the nonconformist sects indicated. But overseas the Church had hitherto failed utterly.

A painfully inadequate attempt had indeed been made to extend the scope of its work as the empire of England grew. But the conditions which faced it made success impossible. Many of the colonies were peopled by men who absolutely repudiated its authority, and who had emigrated from England to be quit of its control; and even in those settlements, such as Virginia and Jamaica, where the colonists were well-affected to the Anglican Church, its history had not always been edifying. At its best, it had been the Church of the white man only; his negro slaves and the aboriginal redskins were deemed unworthy of its ministrations. And at its worst it had attempted to persecute other religious bodies in the colonies, and to arrogate to itself the same exclusive rights and privileges that it was hardly able to maintain even in England.

But the Church of England had now repudiated those of its clergy who refused to obey the plain command of Christ to preach the Gospel to all mankind. No longer did it consider the negro beyond the pale of religion; it recognised him as a fellow-being who was to be rescued from the perils of superstition and heathenism. And on the day when Samuel Crowther the negro was consecrated a bishop of the Church of England in Canterbury Cathedral, it formally admitted that the black man who had embraced Christianity was a brother in the faith, and worthy a foremost place in the ranks of the church militant.[1]

---

[1] One or two of the aborigines had been ordained in the previous century, and one had been chaplain at Cape Coast Castle for fifty years. But these are little more than the exceptions which prove the rule.

A Life of Crowther has been published by Jesse Page.

Possibly some of those who walked and meditated in the precincts of the venerable capital of English Christendom on that memorable day bethought them that near the spot where Crowther had been consecrated Augustine and his monks had chanted their first alleluia in pagan Kent twelve centuries before. And as the summer sun brought into soft relief all the time-worn beauty of the ancient fabric, while the minds of the onlookers wandered back over the long vistas of English history into the remote past when Thor and Woden were the ancestral gods of our people, some at least may have seen also a vision of the future, and looked hopefully for a time when the whole of barbaric Africa should acknowledge as its Divine Master Him who had been crowned and crucified King of the Jews.

Such may have been the transient vision of the promised land; the reality was less encouraging. It is true that Crowther attracted many disciples among his own people, and that the work of the mission was in time extended beyond Sierra Leone into Nigeria and elsewhere; but the expected triumph of Christianity was delayed. There were some disputes and many lapses in the West African Church; the European residents in the district, who were all nominally

---

[1] The change in Anglican opinion regarding the aborigines of the colonies was general. In 1853 the first Maori to be admitted into holy orders was ordained by Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand.

Christians, set no very encouraging example to the native converts, few of whom were able to understand why the strict morality which the missionary preached should be so openly disregarded by other white settlers along the coast; and an ancient rival of the Christian faith descended upon the young and tender branches of the Christian Church which were now being planted in East and West Africa.

The Opposition of Islám.

The fiery Crescent of Islám, which had swept away the Christianity of northern Africa in an avalanche of ruin thirteen centuries before, had not yet exhausted its influence over the sons of man. It had long since spread the knowledge of the Kuran and the creed of Mohammed through the torrid Sudan; it now recognised that the mighty foe which it had overthrown had again entered the field for the conquest of souls; and if it was unable to uproot the Christian missions and the native Christian churches along the West Coast, it at least did much to check their growth, and prevent them from spreading into the interior.

A feeling of some despondency came over the adherents of Christianity when they realised that the success of their rival was greater than their own; but while some strove to deny it, others openly if regretfully admitted the fact. With a spiritual humility that does not always mark the worker in the religious world, some missionaries ascribed the failure to the lack of faith or ability on their own part; others blamed the loose morals of their fellow-Europeans in West Africa.

But whatever influence these causes may have exerted, it is evident that the proud unity of Islám gave it a mighty advantage over the divided and not always friendly sects of Christendom. And in addition the protagonists of the younger faith by no means despised the use of force in spreading their creed, and many a bloody conquest heralded the adoption of the Kuran as the rule of faith in Central and

Western Africa. Mohammedanism, in fact, was a political as well as a religious system, whereas the Christian missionaries from Europe were not directly aided, and were sometimes even discountenanced, by the European administrators. And even when due allowance is made for conversions that were completed at the point of the sword, it is also possible that the teaching of Mohammed was more sympathetic to the African mind; while in comparison with the savage rites of the aboriginal priests, the faith of the Kuran was a civilising factor of no mean strength.

The missionaries of Christ had found it difficult to live for any length of time in the unhealthy climate of West Africa, and altogether impossible to colonise the country;[1] but the prophets of the Prophet of God were no strangers to the African tropics. Yet the conditions under which the weaker soldiers of Christianity fought the battle of their creed, and enlisted the aborigines in their ranks, were far more onerous than those which were imposed on the converts to Islám. An African might be a Mohammedan and still retain a plurality of wives; he might hold to many of his ancient customs and yet keep scrupulously the law of the Prophet. But if he adopted Christianity he was forced to put away all his wives save one, and to forsake old habits and the traditions of his ancestors; he was taught to conform very largely to European ideas and manners which were not only novel and sometimes repugnant to him, but which were often utterly unsuited to Africa.[2]

---

[1] A colony was founded in Nigeria in 1841 by one hundred and forty-five Europeans, many of whom were missionaries. Within a year forty-nine were dead, and the experiment was hurriedly abandoned.

[2] The question of polygamy was an eternal stumbling-block for the missionaries everywhere. Insistence on monogamy prevented many from joining the church; others made a dishonest compromise with their conscience by keeping one wife and several concubines.

One convert in New Zealand, however, adopted a novel and drastic procedure. He was refused baptism on the ground that he had two wives, and went away dejected. Some days later he returned triumphantly, saying, 'Now, missionary, you may baptize me, for I have only one

It was a profound mistake in tactics of the Christian missionaries to identify their religion, which they hoped would become the universal faith of the world, so closely with the general civilisation of Europe. An African could be a Mohammedan and yet remain a good African; but if he became a Christian he was transformed into a kind of hybrid negro European, cut off from his own people by his apostasy, and fully conscious that he was regarded as an inferior by those whom he attempted to imitate.[1]

This attitude on the part of the missionaries inevitably influenced the character of the conflict between Christianity and Islám. None but the zealots on either side could pretend to regard it as merely a struggle between two rival creeds; it became, in fact, very largely a struggle between European and Asiatic ideas for the control of Africa.

The Christian religion was, it is true, Asiatic by birth; but its Asiatic origin had been entirely overlain by nineteen centuries of European development, apart altogether from the distinctively European tendency given it by St. Paul in early days, which had changed it from an essentially Judaic system to one that appealed to the whole Roman Empire and even beyond.

Christianity had never failed in Europe or in those extensions of Europe which formed the new white nations in America and Australasia; it had never succeeded permanently outside Europe, whether in Asia or Africa. The ancient Christian sects of India, the Nestorians of Asia Minor, the

---

wife.' The evangelist was suspicious, and questioned him. 'What have you done with our dear sister, your first wife?' and the native, smacking his lips in pleasant reminiscence, replied simply, 'I have eaten her.'

Some criticism of the policy of the West African Church in this matter will be found in *Ethiopia Unbound*, by Casely Hayford; but I understand from Mr. Hayford's brother, a coloured clergyman, that the Ethiopian Church insists very strongly on monogamy. The whole question of the Ethiopian Church is discussed in vol. vi.

[1] This mistake was not made by the Universities Mission to Central Africa or in Uganda, where Christianity took more firmly and more quickly. See the next chapter.

Copts of Northern Africa, remained indeed apparent exceptions to the general rule, isolated outposts on the territory of alien creeds; but if they were never subdued, they were also never able to extend their faith.

Islám, on the other hand, had never succeeded in Europe and never failed in Asia or in Africa. When it attempted to conquer Europe, it had been beaten back in France and eventually in Spain; even when the Ottoman sultans were seated firmly on the shores of the Bosporus, the creed they professed had made Constantinople a part of Asia; the Turkish provinces of Islám had never become a part of Europe. But in Africa Islám had long since destroyed the early Christianity of the north; in Asia it had fought a two centuries' continuous crusade against Christianity and emerged without loss.

The conflict between Islám and Christianity in Africa was therefore a struggle between Asia and Europe as well as a struggle between two rival creeds; and its severity was accentuated, not only by the methods of the Christian missionaries, but by the constant political advance of Christian European powers and the general polity they pursued.

Every great European power, for example, opposed slavery, fought against the slave-dealers, raided them, imprisoned them, and in the end suppressed them. Yet in every Moslem state slavery was recognised as a part of the regular social order; the slave-dealers of Africa were chiefly Mohammedans, and that trade was mainly in their hands. The opposition to slavery came from Europe and the Christian churches of Europe; the defence of slavery came from Asia and Islám.

Nowhere does this fact of the basic opposition between Christian European rule and Islám emerge more clearly than in the rise of Mahdism in the Sudan.[1] Slavery was suppressed in the Sudan by General Gordon, an Englishman and a fervent

---

[1] See ch. iii.

Christian. His action received the warm approval of Europe and of Christianity ; it was condemned by the Mohammedans of Africa. And when the Mahdi arose as a new interpreter of Islám, and founded a system avowedly opposed to both European and Christian influences, the slave-dealers flocked to his banner, and were not repulsed ; slavery was revived as the power of Mahdism spread ; and while Mahdism enjoyed its short period of supremacy in the Sudan, the slave system at once renewed its ancient vigour. Thirteen years later Mahdism fell before the advance of England ; and slavery fell with its ally.

The struggle between the two religions thus reached far beyond the sphere of religion into the fundamental social, political, and administrative problems of life. But the position of the combatants was somewhat different. Islám was at once a religious and a political system, and opposed to any system, either religious or political, which conflicted with its double aim ; but European administration was often independent of, and distinct from, the propaganda of Christianity. Modern European statecraft divided the Church from the State, religion from politics ; ancient and modern Islám agreed in uniting the two.

Under the European dominion of Africa, therefore, Islám might survive as a religious creed, but not as a political power ; under Mohammedan rule neither Christianity nor European administration would survive at all. The general tendency at the close of the nineteenth century seemed to be for European administration to win its way everywhere, and for Islám to hold its own as a religious force but not as a political power.[1]

---

[1] The danger which European rule threatened to the political power of Islám gave rise to the Pan-Islám movement for the regeneration of the Mohammedan world. The adherents of that movement often differed among themselves as to the exact meaning of their aspirations ; but it is probably not inaccurate to say that an active movement for the reunion of all the Christian Churches under one spiritual head, in intimate alliance with a union of all the Christian nations under one political head, would

Superficial Character of European Influence.

Whatever the cause, and whatever the ultimate result, the Crescent for the time shone more brightly than the Cross in the central and western parts of Africa; the religion and the colonies of Europe were both exotics on an alien soil. In this respect, indeed, the modern tropical settlements compared unfavourably with the older Roman dominion in North Africa; nor was it until the foundation of a school of tropical medicine towards the close of the nineteenth century that the prospects of European colonisation improved. And had the Europeans withdrawn their outposts along the West Coast previous to that time it may be doubted whether either native Christianity or the thin veneer of European civilisation which accompanied it would have survived a decade.

Of no other European settlements in any other part of the world could it have been said that they had made so transitory an impression after four centuries of constant intercourse. But the reason for this superficial character of European influence in West Africa is not far to seek. It is written at large in the whole history of the West Coast settlements; it is the essential fact behind all other facts, through which all other facts must be interpreted; it is the warning finger of an ever-present skeleton, pointed with equal menace at the slave-dealer, the philanthropist, the trader, and the

---

have done for Christian Europe what Pan-Islámism wished to do for Moslem Asia and Africa.

The whole subject of Pan-Islámism is somewhat obscure; but it is evident that Islám in Africa was less ready to co-operate with European administration than Islám in India. Possibly the greater activity of the Christian missionaries in Africa, together with the contiguity of Egypt and Arabia, the sacred home of Islám, may have had some influence in strengthening the movement in Africa. The central idea of Pan-Islámism in its active form was by no means new; it may be seen in the threat of Arábi in the Egyptian rising of 1882 to unite the whole Mohammedan world against England if Gladstone persisted in intervention in Egypt; and also in some aspects of the Mahdi's conception of his mission. (See ch. iii.; an interesting but not very explicit pamphlet in favour of Pan-Islámism was published in 1908 by Shaikh Mushir Hosain Kidwai of India.)

missionary. That warning finger was stretched from the hand of Death, to threaten every white man who adventured his existence on the unhealthiest coast in the world.

The first European possessions in West Africa, like those acquired almost at the same time in Southern Asia, had been nothing more than isolated trading-stations. A large and lucrative traffic was carried on in gold, ivory, and slaves; but although there was almost as much rivalry between Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English traders in these commodities in West Africa as between the same nations in the East Indies, it soon became evident that there could be no comparison between the two countries. The trade of West Africa was indeed very profitable; but its climate was deadly.

Unhealthiness of West Africa.

Many men could live for years in India without losing their vigour; but West Africa was extremely unhealthy. The mortality among Europeans was appalling. The officials were considered to have the best chance of life, and the traders were notoriously more subject to disease than the administrators. Yet no fewer than sixteen of the governors of Sierra Leone died there in ninety years, and over a hundred missionaries perished. In thirty years the Church Missionary Society sent out one hundred and nine individuals to propagate Christianity; at the end of that time only one of the whole number remained. The rest had either died in the colony or returned to England with ruined constitutions.

Open graves were always kept in readiness, for the toll of death along the coast was steady and unceasing, and quick burial was necessary in the interest of the living. Every few years an epidemic broke out, which in a few days would kill off all but two or three of the Europeans at several or even all of the stations. Occasionally the few survivors would abandon the settlement in a panic.[1]

---

[1] For an example of such a panic, see Boyce's *Yellow Fever and its Prevention.*

Many of those who came to the coast succumbed at once. A number had fever intermittently for years, until their system was thoroughly permeated with disease and weakened by the regular attacks; at length these too would die. A number recuperated their health by sea voyages or a long holiday in Europe, and so prolonged their lives; but if they settled permanently in West Africa these were also doomed. A few only were immune, and lived a lifetime in the country without a touch of fever or the loss of perfect health; but the number of these, said a traveller who knew the coast well, could be reckoned on the fingers of one hand.

The doctors, who often perished of the malady which they were expected to cure, were helpless, and could not even identify the disease, which went by the name of the black sickness. Various methods were tried to counteract the effects of the deadly climate; but the only certain method was to stay away from West Africa.[1]

European colonisation in the strict sense of the word was impossible under these conditions. The few white women in West Africa seldom survived the perils of childbirth; the rearing of white children was out of the question. The inevitable consequence was that the white men generally kept black mistresses; but however satisfactory this simple solution may have been to individuals, it hardly redounded to the credit of the social fabric as a whole.[2]

---

[1] An early English expedition to Sierra Leone in 1586 learnt something of the dangers of the tropical climate. 'In the harbour,' writes the diarist of the voyage in Hakluyt, 'divers of our men fell sicke of a disease in the belly, which for the time was extreme, but God be thanked, it was but of small continuance.' They were lucky; three hundred years later an English lady travelling in those parts was told, half in jest but half in earnest, that the only people worth knowing in Sierra Leone were the Wesleyans, because they were the only denomination that could boast a ceremonial hearse. An encouraging introduction to the tourist!

[2] Nor did this practical demonstration of the brotherhood of the whole human race meet with the approval of the missionaries; but they were seldom more successful in parting the white man from his black mistress than in inducing the black man to give up all but one of his many wives.

The slave trade, the most important industry of the stations on the coast, was abolished by Britain in 1807. Its abolition was the dividing line in West African history; but for some years the loss of the traffic naturally affected the settlements very injuriously. Other causes, too, now combined to lessen the importance of West Africa. The trade in gold suffered when fresh goldfields were discovered in other continents; and as new markets for ivory opened out elsewhere, the West African stations underwent for a time an eclipse of their always precarious prosperity. And when more attractive regions of the earth came under their control, the British in particular ceased to care much for a region which was associated with the distasteful history of the slave trade, and whose unhealthiness moreover had already earned it the unenviable title of the white man's grave. Even Sierra Leone, the philanthropic colony for the blacks, which had been founded as some recompense for the wrongs done them by previous generations of Europeans, was of too small importance, and its success too dubious, permanently to interest many.

Temporary Decline of British West Africa.

Nor did there seem much prospect of a rich trade with the interior, such as had offered in India. Rumours of the wealth and magnificence of Timbuktu had indeed reached Europe. But that city of the desert plain proved elusive to the traveller;[1] and the intervening lands, as Mungo Park had discovered at the cost of his life, were filled with hostile and barbarous inhabitants, whom it was found impossible either to conciliate or to conquer.

Its Scattered Character.

The French, however, had more faith in West Africa; and their faith was rewarded. They had not hitherto adventured far inland; but by a series of conquests and annexations they now spread over a large tract of the Sudan from the Senegal to the Niger, and founded a great North African empire; and in the result, while Britain was advancing rapidly in every other part of the continent, the old British stations on the West Coast were allowed to remain mere scattered depots, whose extension into the interior was blocked by the French at their rear.[1] Every British colony in the district suffered from this cause; but this was particularly the case with the settlement at the mouth of the Gambia, which was absolutely surrounded inland by French territory.

---

[1] The first European who entered Timbuktu was Major Laing in 1826: but for many years more little was known of the place, and its name became proverbial for inaccessibility.

The Refusal to Expand.

But the determination of the British not to enlarge their West African possessions was deliberate. In 1865 the Imperial Government stated that it was 'not its policy to extend the dominion of the British on the West Coast'; and the principle thus emphatically laid down was reaffirmed a few years later. The age was one in which considerable doubt was felt as to the wisdom of enlarging an empire which many believed to be already sufficiently large;[2] but the most fervent advocates of expansion must have admitted that the authorities were not without good reasons for their objections to this region. Neither Sierra Leone nor the Gold Coast was very prosperous. Neither had any great reputation. Every attempt to open up the Niger had hitherto failed disastrously. And the deadly climate of the whole country was alone fully sufficient to account for its unpopularity.

The determination not to acquire more territory on this pestilential coast was adhered to as far as possible. The few enlargements of the empire that were made in West Africa were made with regret, and only at the earnest behest of the missionary who sought new converts, or the trader who sought new markets; and two settlements that had already been established, at Fernando Po and in the Kamerun, were abandoned altogether.

---

[1] Nearly the same situation had arisen in North America between French and British colonies a century before. See vol. i. bk. v, ch. iii.

[2] See bk. xvi. ch. ii.

Fernando Po, 1827-46.

While the British navy was engaged in suppressing the West African slave trade, the island of Fernando Po was occupied for some years as a base of operations. That island, originally discovered by a Portuguese navigator named Fernan do Povo—Ferdinand of the People—about the year 1471, and called by him appropriately Formosa—the beautiful—had belonged in turn both to Spain and Portugal. But the aborigines[1] were hostile, and the climate unhealthy; neither nation had colonised the place, and Spain in fact had abandoned it since 1782. British merchant vessels now began to call; and on Christmas Day, 1827, Captain W. F. Owen took possession of Fernando Po in the name of the British Government, purchasing one square mile of land from the chiefs, and naming it Port Clarence in honour of the future William IV.

It was hoped that a new colony of free blacks might be founded here; and that the place might become, not only a naval base, but a base from which civilisation might be introduced into the heart of Africa. And Lieutenant-Colonel Nicholls, the Governor of the island, had conceived the idea of founding a great British protectorate in the Kamerun, and had already hoisted the British flag on the mainland after concluding a treaty with one of the chiefs.

But ill-luck, bad management, and official folly wrecked both schemes. The sailors had not sufficient acquaintance with hygiene, and too much acquaintance with rum, debauchery, and mosquitoes, to survive for long in Fernando Po; and in 1834 it was abandoned as a naval station. The island was, however, still occupied by the British West Africa Company, and a Baptist mission was carried on among the natives with good results.

But in 1846 Spain re-occupied the island. Port Clarence was renamed Santa Isabel. The Catholic priests objected to the doctrines, although they gladly accepted the medicines, of the English Protestants; and in 1858 the Baptists were expelled and their land appropriated.[1] A small English-speaking colony of negroes remained at Santa Isabel, and a few Protestant missionaries were allowed to return in 1870 under certain restrictions; but Spain has not since relaxed her hold on the fertile and beautiful island.

---

[1] Known as Bubes, incorrectly pronounced boobies by the English. An interesting native legend held that they sprang from the crater of one of the island volcanoes.

The Kamerun Failure, 1848-85.

The Kamerun—a German spelling of an English corruption of a Portuguese word meaning prawns, which abound in the mangrove creeks along the Biafran coast—would also have been numbered among the British African protectorates as Nicholls desired, had there been no Imperial Government in London. In 1848, some thirteen years after the British flag had been hoisted in the district, the first English Baptist mission was established there by Alfred Saker, 'the apostle of the Kamerun,' a Kentish man from the beautiful village of Borough Green near Wrotham.

Life was precarious and work difficult in the mission station, to which the Biblical name of Bethel had been given. Once the mission door was splintered by a native axe; at another time 'knives, spoons, forks, table linen, flour, goats and fowls were carried off.' The whole district, whose chief occupation was war and slave-trading, furnished, in fact, an 'indescribable scene of disorder and confusion.'

But Saker persevered with his work. While the natives were stealing his goods, he was learning their language, and even compiling a vocabulary for use in a future school; a township was founded and called Victoria, which exists to this day; the men were taught to work, the women to wear clothes, and both learnt to cultivate the West Indian fruits which Saker had brought over.

---

[1] The Spanish Government, after a lengthy delay, paid some compensation; the German Government in the Kamerun refused.

In time such steady labour made its mark. Some of the missionaries, it must be confessed, measured civilisation solely by psalm-singing, and complained that Saker was too material in his aims; but Livingstone called his work 'the most remarkable on the African coast,' and Winwood Reade recorded that 'old sanguinary customs were to a large extent abolished; witchcraft hid itself in the forest; the fetich superstition was derided by old and young, and well-built houses sprang up on every hand. It was really marvellous to mark the change in a few years. From actual cannibals many became honest, intelligent, well-skilled artisans. An elementary literature was established, and the whole Bible translated into a hitherto unwritten tongue.'

A court of equity was now established, attended by native chiefs as well as Europeans, the British Consul presiding.[1] British influence advanced steadily; the Kamerun became a kind of unofficial British protectorate; and in 1882 the local chiefs requested that the country might be annexed to the British Empire—a request endorsed by German as well as British merchants in the district.

The request was referred to the British Government; and the Government delayed, if it did not ignore, the matter. Two years passed.

But Germany acted while Britain slept. German merchants offered to buy part of the Kamerun territory if the chief would accept a German protectorate. The native hesitated; Britain still delayed.

Lord Granville was at the Foreign Office—if it would be too high praise to call him the evil genius of the place, he may at least be styled its presiding incapacity—and he admitted that he felt not 'the slightest jealousy of the Germans acquiring colonial possessions,' and that he 'did not share the desires of those who wished Great Britain to acquire Fiji, Arabia, all Western Africa, etc.' He believed Bismarck's expansion policy to be mere electioneering bluster; he believed the assurance that the German agent, Dr. Nachtigal, was travelling in West Africa solely on a scientific and commercial mission; he believed, in fact, in everything save the necessity for action.[1]

---

[1] Among the British Consuls for Fernando Po and the Kamerun was Sir Richard Burton. He called the place 'the Foreign Office grave,' so fatal was the climate.

At length it was discovered that Nachtigal was making a series of annexations in Togoland; and the indolent Granville suddenly awoke to the reality of the situation. The British Consul, then in England, was instructed to proceed to the Kamerun and conclude a treaty declaring the district a British protectorate.

The Foreign Office had done its part in delaying the acquisition; it was now the turn of another department to hinder British interests. The Treasury refused to furnish funds for the journey; and only when Granville sent a private enquiry to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to know whether the country were governed by the Cabinet or the clerks of the Treasury, was the amount provided.

It was now too late. On 11th July 1885 Nachtigal arrived at the Kamerun. The following day a treaty was concluded with the chief. Four days later, on 16th July, the British Consul arrived; but the German flag was already flying over the camp of the potentate who had offered his country to the British.

If it is true that the road to hell is paved with lost opportunities, some of the stones seem at times to have fallen athwart the path of the British Empire.

But in spite of these events, and the decision of the imperial authorities not to increase their West African possessions,

---

[1] It might have been advanced in excuse for Granville that he was influenced by the well-founded dislike of the West Coast as a field for British enterprise. But there is no evidence to support the contention; and he was equally supine in Egypt (see ch. iii.) and in the Papuan affair. See vol. v. bk. xx.

Sierra Leone had been enlarged in 1861, and its boundaries were again extended in 1896; and in spite of its unsavoury reputation, the settlement became a great trading centre whose character gradually improved, until one official was able to claim that the place was thoroughly transformed.[1] But a serious native rebellion in the year 1898 showed that the transformation had not changed the character of the aborigines in the newer and more remote parts of the protectorate.

Sierra Leone Enlarged.

Further along the West Coast towards the east, the gold deposits which had introduced the word Guinea into Europe had long attracted the white trader. The first British intruders on what was originally a Portuguese monopoly appeared on the Gold Coast in 1553. Others followed in due course; about a century later Cape Coast Castle, the strongest place along those shores, was captured. A thriving trade in gold and slaves[2] was carried on from this base; other stations elsewhere were established from time to time, and gradually the trade of the Gold Coast became engrossed in British hands.

The Gold Coast Expansion.

But the very success of the British led to difficulties. They were prepared to buy every raw material that the country produced except slaves; and slaves they not only would not buy themselves, but they would not allow others to buy. And it happened that slaves were the commodity that the warrior nation of Ashantis in the interior most wanted to sell.

Now the authority of the British extended little further inland than the range of the guns on their forts; and the Ashantis had little belief in the military powers of the few

---

[1] T. J. Alldridge's *A Transformed Colony.*

[2] The average annual export of gold was about £200,000 sterling, of which the British exported more than a seventh part. The slaves were confined in the dungeons of Cape Coast Castle; in the seventeenth century they were branded with the letters D. Y.—those being the initials of the Duke of York, the head of the Royal Africa Company.

European traders who occupied those forts. For this the Ashantis could not well be blamed, since they judged, as all men in a similar position must have judged, from the only information they had; and accordingly they often threatened and insulted those who they believed could not retaliate.

The Ashanti Wars, 1817-1900.

After several of these episodes a British embassy visited Kumassi, the Ashanti capital, in the hope of improving relations between Cape Coast Castle and the native power. The embassy was received with barbaric honours by a barbaric king; and it succeeded in its errand. A treaty of perpetual peace and harmony was concluded between the British and the Ashantis.

The sequel was unfortunate. Renewed threats and insults soon showed that the Africans attached no importance to the pledges they had given; and in 1823, six years after they had sworn perpetual amity, war broke out. The Governor of Cape Coast Castle was a soldier; but he made the mistake which so many gallant British soldiers have made, and underrated the strength of the enemy.

He paid for his mistake with his life. The British were badly worsted; and not until they in turn defeated the Ashantis some time later was their position on the Gold Coast in any way secure.

The treaty of peace which was made in 1831 was kept for a generation. But during those years the power of the Ashantis was once more growing formidable; and their old military traditions were not forgotten. It is true that some attempts were made to convert them to Christianity; and a mission school was established in the blood-stained city of Kumassi. The evangelists might as well have tried to convert a ravening tiger with a religious tract; no argument less sharp than the sword was able to convince the Ashantis.

At length it became necessary to resort to force. A small

British army marched through the dense forests which lie between the Ashanti capital and the coast early in 1874, under the brilliant generalship of Wolseley, who had seen service in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. Two severe actions were fought, in which the Ashantis, although resisting bravely, were defeated; and on 4th February 1874, the victorious invaders entered Kumassi.

The king had fled. But the great square on which the horrid rites of human sacrifice had been performed with hideous regularity still ran with blood; the stench from the rotting corpses of a thousand victims still filled the air. Some of the conquerors turned away in disgust from the sickening sight; the city was burnt, and it was believed that an end had been put to these feasts of death, for the Ashanti power was crippled by the war.

But the savage rites of Kumassi were not so easily suppressed. Slavery and sacrifice revived; and not until the native king Prempeh was deposed in 1896 were the orgies of destruction stopped. Five years later, in September 1901, the whole Ashanti kingdom was annexed to the Gold Coast Colony, and a railway was soon built to connect Kumassi with the sea.[1]

Nigeria.

The important countries to which the general name of Nigeria is now given have had a more chequered history than Sierra Leone or even Ashanti. The mouths of the Calabar and Oil Rivers were familiar to Portuguese traders long before the British appeared on those coasts; Portuguese names still hold a place upon the maps, and corruptions of Portuguese words are still found in many of the native dialects. But centuries before the first Portuguese trader put in at the Bight of Benin for his cargo of slaves and palm-oil, the staple commodities of old Nigeria, the people of those lands were known by report to Europe. The commerce of West Africa was in the hands of the intelligent and industrious Hausas, who inhabited the countries watered by the Niger, and whose capital of Kano was not altogether an unworthy rival of the greater Timbuktu. Some account of their activities percolated through the Sahara to the cities of the Mediterranean, and the Moors did not disdain to traffic with the heathen on the Niger, when the wares of the heathen were profitable objects of exchange. Traces of Moorish influence in their country survive to tell of Hausa dealings with another commercial people, perhaps to lend some support to the doubtful Hausa tradition of a national migration from the East in an earlier age ; and the civilising effects of relations with men in a more advanced stage of development were not absent from this portion of West Africa.

---

[1] For these wars, see Stanley's *Coomassie and Magdala*; Wolseley's *Story of a Soldier's Life*; Baden Powell's *The Downfall of Prempeh*; and Armitage's *The Ashanti Campaign of* 1900.

But the Hausas were traders, and their kingdom fell, as commercial communities have often fallen, before a warrior race. About the close of the eighteenth century a new Mohammedan power, of the kind that has frequently arisen in Africa, from the Mamelukes of Egypt to the Edressites of Morocco, overwhelmed their independence ; henceforth the Hausas were ruled by the Fulani dynasty, their caravans paid toll to the conqueror, their chiefs rendered tribute, their capital was removed to Sokoto, and their religion was forcibly changed for that of Islám.

Their subjection seemed complete ; but the speedy decline of Mohammedan empires has often equalled their rapid rise. Othman Fadis, the founder of the Fulani power, is said to have prophesied on his death-bed that the dynasty he had established would last no longer than a hundred years. The tradition was preserved, and the expansion of the British Empire over the Niger countries within a century has established the monarch's credit as a seer of the future.

Lagos, 1852.

British traders, like the Portuguese, had for some time frequented the Niger coast, and had dealings with the natives at the mouths of the delta, which was not yet known for the long-sought entrance of the Niger to the ocean. More intimate relations came in 1852, when the British Government turned its attention to the slave trade for which the port of Lagos had long been infamous. A local chief was assisted to the rule of that country on condition that he suppressed the commerce in human beings and encouraged dealings in the other products of the place; as the price of his power he was also compelled to allow Christian missionaries in his dominions, and the first Anglican bishop of Lagos arrived in 1854.

The authority of the new native ruler was never very considerable, and seven years subsequently he was persuaded to consent to a treaty by which he was deposed with a life pension, while the British became possessed of the island and port of Lagos and the surrounding territories. The first definite step in the creation of British Nigeria had been taken.

Early British Failures in Nigeria.

Lagos prospered better under its new masters without the slaves than it had done before with them; but there seemed for some time no prospect of any extension of British rule from the Yoruba country, in which Lagos lay, to the Fulani-Hausa territories. The whole district indeed had acquired a fatal notoriety that hampered every enterprise. One expedition after another had failed. Mungo Park had been slain there. Later explorers had died there of fever. An important settlement that had been assisted by the British Government to plant an experimental trading and mission station on the Niger had been forced to abandon the place in 1842, after a few months of continual disasters. Disease and death had always wrecked the hopes of missionary pioneers and industrial colonists alike. And the evil fame of the Bight of Benin was preserved in a sailor's couplet known all over the world :—

‘Beware, oh, beware of the Bight of Benin,
Where few come out, although many go in.’[1]

The Beginnings of Success, 1857.

It was a Scotsman who refused to believe that previous failures barred the Niger delta permanently to the white man; and the name of MacGregor Laird will always be remembered as that of the first effective European pioneer in the land of the Hausas. He had seen something of the early troubles of the British on the Niger; he was convinced that those troubles could be surmounted; and with the admirable pertinacity of his nation, he enforced his views as to the commercial possibilities of the district on a reluctant Imperial Government, which had no wish to see any increase in its oversea responsibilities, and which above all things never wished to hear the name of the Niger River again, so completely was that name allied with failure in the public mind.

But governments have two qualities in common with windows. The observant can generally see through them; and the persevering know that if pushed hard enough they will give way. The British Government in the end gave way to Laird's importunity, and bound itself to contribute towards the maintenance of a steamer which he agreed to place on the Niger in the year 1857.

His belief has long since justified itself; but at first one misfortune after another hindered Laird's work. His vessel was wrecked, his capital proved insufficient, and the natives were unfriendly to his enterprise; but trade grew slowly, and the dogged Scot hung on.

Only death could conquer him; but death in that fatal country conquered him too soon. In January 1861, the father of British Nigeria died; and the unfortunate consequences of his loss were soon evident. The Imperial Government withdrew its subsidy, some of the trading stations that had recently been established were closed, and the work that Laird had undertaken was thrown back many years.

---

[1] There are many variants of the couplet. Another version runs :—

‘Beware and take care of the Bight of Benin,
There's one comes out for forty go in.’

But not permanently. If the Niger was still dangerous to life it was proved to be profitable to commerce; and joint-stock companies and individual traders, both English and French, now appeared on the scene. The competition of the white men for the trade of the blacks was not very edifying; so hard did the rivals press each other that dividends sometimes vanished as well as discretion, and the natives refused to deal in anything but spirits and guns and powder.

The Royal Niger Company, 1882-1900.

Happily reform came before demoralisation had gone too far. Several of the British traders amalgamated from time to time in their own interests; and in 1882 a powerful Niger Company was formed in London with a capital of a million sterling. The French traders up the river were now bought out; an agreement was come to with Germany as to the boundaries of the Kamerun and the Niger district; and in 1886 a charter was given to this corporation by the British Government, and henceforth it was known as the Royal Niger Company.[1]

Insensibly trade was merging into dominion, as it always must in a barbaric or unsettled country; and the Company was now directly concerned with government as well as commerce. An administrative system was evolved, largely under the direction of Sir George Taubman Goldie, who had been the leading spirit in the formation of the Niger Company, and whose admirable work soon made itself felt in every department of Nigerian affairs. Native levies were trained, and under European leadership the Hausa proved himself a good soldier. Disturbances and the inevitable petty rebellions were put down with a firm hand, while one serious but entirely successful campaign was fought in 1897 against the recalcitrant Emir of Nubé, the most powerful native ruler in the Company's territory.

---

[1] The motto of the Company was *Ars, Jus, Pax.* A disgusted Frenchman, who had been foiled of his hopes in Nigeria, observed that it was a typical piece of British hypocrisy for a corporation which was always engaged in native wars and aggressive campaigns to inscribe peace on its banner. But possibly the Company referred to the peace which it enforced on any country it annexed. The records of British Nigeria certainly justify the middle substantive; but I confess that I have never quite understood what connection West Africa could boast with art.

Its Expansion of Territory.

But the keynote of the Niger Company's policy was the extension of its influence into the interior. Treaties were now concluded with most of the many native chiefs along the Niger and its tributaries, by which the latter bound themselves to recognise British suzerainty; if they refused they were deposed, and more submissive vassals placed on their petty thrones.[1] A considerable extent of territory was thus secured; and along with this increase in its administrative area the trade of the Company advanced rapidly. And whatever views might be held as to the morality of the means by which European rule was extended over this and other barbaric countries, the firm hands of its new masters proved very beneficial to Nigeria. While the horrors of slavery, torture, and massacre were stamped out, new industries were introduced, and the productiveness of old industries enlarged; the revenue increased from £42,396 in 1887 to £113,396 in 1898; and after paying all the expenses of administration—which necessarily exceeded the revenue very considerably every year—a steady dividend of six to seven per cent. was paid to the shareholders in the Royal Niger Company from the profits of the Niger trade.

---

[1] Had not this drastic step been taken, a large part, perhaps even the whole, of what is now Northern Nigeria would have fallen before the French, who were rapidly extending their possessions in the Sudan and the hinterlands of Nigeria at this time. Their agents were equally ready to make similar treaties with the native chiefs by similar forcible means, but the British in most cases anticipated them, thanks mainly to Sir G. T. Goldie and the Niger Company. The native chiefs had no chance in this pull-devil, pull-baker competition of great colonial powers; but the disappearance of their barbaric sway is hardly a fit subject for even sentimental regrets. Most of them would have sold their kingdoms and their subjects for a few bottles of bad gin, and have thrown their own souls in to clinch the bargain; and their disappearance brought nothing but gain to their people.

The British Nigeria Protectorate, 1900.

Successful as were these operations, and beneficial as they demonstrably proved both to the rulers and the ruled, there was something as anomalous to the later Victorian mind in the fact of a commercial corporation administering the government of a country as there was to the early Victorian at the idea of a government engaging in trade; and while it is sometimes convenient for the administration and trade of a young country to be in the same hands, it is a sound principle of imperial politics that separates government from trade when the period of infancy is past. And Nigeria had in any case already come within the sphere of those international politics which were the proper concern of the Imperial Government and not of the Niger Company; for its boundaries, which now adjoined the French protectorate of Dahomey as well as the German protectorate of Kamerun, had been discussed and delimited in successive conferences with the French and German Governments. In the year 1900, therefore, it was decided that the time had come for the Company to render back its administrative powers to the British Government, after fourteen years of complete control: its profitable commercial rights remained unaltered.

The transfer made little actual difference to Nigeria. The country had been well governed before, and it was well governed still; trade continued to advance, and revenue to expand. But the administration was unified; the imperial protectorate which had been declared over the Oil Rivers District in 1891, and which was subsequently given the name of the Niger Coast Protectorate,[1] was joined to the lands which the Company had ruled; the older possession of Lagos was added in 1906, and the united territories of British Nigeria, the largest and most valuable of the British dominions in West Africa, now comprised altogether some 335,000 square miles, and a population roughly estimated at about fifteen millions.

Its Development.

Under the direct control of Britain, the country was divided into two chief provinces of Northern and Southern Nigeria, ruled by two Governors; and subdivided into smaller districts, each of which was placed under a Resident. Railways were built, which opened up the interior, facilitated and cheapened the carriage of goods, and placed the cultivator of these rich, tropical lands in touch with the European market. So rapid was the building of the railways, in fact, that by April 1911, the line from Lagos was opened as far as Kano, the old Hausa capital, eight hundred miles inland; and the journey, which had previously been a difficult and dangerous one of at least a month's duration, now occupied no more than three days. Other lines and extensions were in contemplation; and these lines, which were financed partly by grant from the imperial exchequer and partly by local taxation, were the most important among the many factors making for the transformation which awaited Nigeria in the twentieth century.

---

[1] In this protectorate was situated the native city of Benin, the celebrated City of Blood, which rivalled Kumassi in the extent and horror of its human sacrifices. A British embassy to the ruler of the place was ambushed and destroyed in 1898; and when the punitive expedition which avenged that massacre entered the city it found hundreds of dismembered and decaying human corpses, the sight and smell of which made the invaders physically sick. The story is told in detail in Boisragon's *Benin Massacre*, and Bacon's *Benin, the City of Blood.*

CHAPTER II

BRITISH EAST AFRICA: 1823-1901[1]

In the annals of Western Africa the guilt and the glory must all be assigned to the Europeans who have visited and developed the coast and the interior; the slave-trader and the evangelist, the rascally commercial agent who sells alcoholic poison to the natives, and the just administrator who rules the tribes, have in every case been Europeans.

But on the other side of the continent the European merchant or missionary was an intruder on soil that had been dominated for centuries by alien invaders from Asia. The first Portuguese explorers, who visited the shores of Eastern Africa in the year 1498, found that Asiatics had the monopoly of trade at such places as Mozambique and Mombasa; and although the Latins claimed, and to some extent enforced their claim to possession, their influence was limited, and the Asiatics still retained a large measure of their old power.

The ruins of a sixteenth-century Portuguese fort still indeed remind the traveller who arrives at Mombasa of the earliest attempt of modern Europe to dominate the Asiatics on the African coast. But the great days of the Portuguese empire were few; their agents in East Africa had but little success; and the Asiatic traders easily survived them.

---

[1] The materials for this chapter are ample. Eliot's *East African Protectorate* is the best general work on the subject, to which Johnston's more copious *Uganda* may be added. Speke's *Travels*, Stanley's works and *Autobiography*. There are two histories of the Universities Mission: the earlier by Rowley, a later one by Anderson-Morshead. Other missionary writings which must be consulted are the *Life of Bishop Hannington*; *Mackay of Uganda*, *Pilkington of Uganda*, and Tucker's *Eighteen Years in Uganda*. The political history of the protectorate is narrated in Lugard's *Rise of our East African Empire*; and there are many British Parliamentary papers and official reports on the subject. A large number of books deal with sport and big game hunting in East Africa.

Other European nations, engaged like the Portuguese in the struggle for Indian trade, paid even less attention than the Portuguese had done to a district of whose resources they were ignorant. The vessels of the Dutch East India Company made no break between Cape Town and Batavia. The French called for fresh supplies at Mauritius, their base in the Indian Ocean; but neither Zanzibar nor Mombasa knew the Bourbon flag. An occasional English vessel may have put in at one of the few ports along the East African coast, or have been driven ashore by stress of weather far out of her course between India and the Cape; but the British had no stations and no trade with East Africa. The whole country beyond the roughly-charted shores remained unknown to Europe until the nineteenth century.

The British Protectorate, 1823-24.

A petty incident in time forecast what the future might have in store, but none saw its significance. Mombasa was wealthy, but it was also a city of continual war; it had been stormed and sacked by invader and plunderer as often as an English border town or a coveted Mediterranean island. But one of the rulers of the place seems at last to have tired of, or perhaps been worsted in, the incessant strife; and in the year 1823 he placed himself and his dominions under the protection of the British. That his submission was voluntary and unasked was sufficiently shown by the fact that it was repudiated by the next British naval captain who put in at Mombasa; but despite this cold reception of the proffered allegiance, the native prince still kept the Union Jack flying over his dominions, until a more definite refusal in the following year finally dashed his hopes of outside help. The British Empire lost a province, and East Africa lost a protector, for a time; the war was renewed, and anarchy once more came by its own.

But nevertheless the beginnings of change were at hand. The influence and commerce of Britain now began to grow rapidly in Zanzibar, the island mart of East Africa; energetic men soon projected their glance across the narrow stretch of water which separated that great trading centre from the mainland and the unknown interior. The explorations of David Livingstone in South Africa inspired other travellers to emulate his example nearer the equator; and while the trader and the traveller still hesitated to take the leap into the unknown, the ardent soldiers of the Christian Church stepped into the breach and became the true pioneers in the wilderness.

Christianity in Central Africa.

There is no more brilliant chapter in the annals of the Church of England than the great effort which it made to evangelise the whole of aboriginal Africa in the nineteenth century. That effort did not indeed stand alone among its various missions; but it was perhaps the most decisive proof that the ancient national Church had at last awakened from the prolonged torpor to which it had doomed itself since it had clung to a pathetically loyal belief in the outcast Stuarts under Hanoverian England. The Low Church revival in the days of Wilberforce, the High Church revival a generation later under Newman, Pusey, and Keble infused the enthusiastic blood of youth into a venerable establishment that at one time seemed to have lost faith in its work; and from that time the chosen envoys of the Anglican Church went forth to labour in foreign lands without a doubt that the cross of St. George, the emblem of their order, would lead them on to victory.

Much had indeed been lost already by a century of sloth. The Church had refused the invaluable help of Wesley at home, and England was split into rival religious sects, whose common profession of Christianity by no means prevented hatred and jealousy of each other's activities. The Church had neglected the American colonies, and forgotten everything except its own legal rights and privileges in Canada until it had lost both privileges and opportunity.

But now at last the Church had girt on its armour. Its missionaries were seen in far New Zealand, and among the isles of the Pacific Ocean. Others of its evangelists planted the creed of their Master on the deadly West African coast; and when David Livingstone called attention to the virgin field of Eastern Africa his appeal met with an instant and ready response.[1] In 1860, three years before the first native bishop of West Africa was consecrated in Canterbury Cathedral, the Universities Mission to Central Africa was established at Cambridge.

The Universities Mission in Nyassa, 1861.

The two pioneers who led the way were both dead within twelve months of their arrival in Nyassaland; but others pressed forward to fill the gap, and by 1862 the first church had been built at Chibusa on the Shiré River.

Its furniture was plain and simple. The altar was nothing more than two boxes covered with red velvet, and indeed the whole church was only built of reeds. But this lonely outpost of Christianity in the wilderness served as an augury of permanent success which later years showed was not delusive; for near that spot the great mission church and station of Blantyre now crowns one of the fertile provinces of British Central Africa.

At Zanzibar, 1863.

In the following year, however, the headquarters of the Universities Mission were transferred to a more accessible position at Zanzibar. The Sultan of that island was a follower of Islám; he was also deeply interested in the slave trade. But he was well inclined to Europeans, particularly to Englishmen; and he placed no obstacle in the way of the mission.

The evangelists at once found themselves confronted with an extraordinary mixture of races and tongues; for Zanzibar, whose central geographical position had made it the leading mart of East Africa and the Indian Ocean, had attracted men of every nation to its shores. In its gaudy bazaars were to be found the rasping and guttural Arab, the soft-tongued and languid Baluchi, the fiery-eyed and black-bearded Omani, the flowing-locked and tall-hatted Persian, and the lithe, slim-waisted Somali; the human material for the great slave-market which Zanzibar boasted had been recruited from every tribe in Central and East Africa; while a few Europeans had also made their homes on the island. Conspicuous among these latter was Sir John Kirk, the British consul, to whose good counsel and sage advice the Sultan was much indebted, and from whose sterling character that monarch had largely formed his favourable opinion of the British people.

---

[1] A general account of Livingstone, and of the Ethiopian Church, is given in vol. vi. bk. xxv.

The difficulties which faced them in Zanzibar did not discourage the missionaries, and their work was carried on with quiet thoroughness. The gospel of Christ was translated into Swahili, which was as much the language of the East Coast as Hausa was of the West. The missionaries likewise learned to preach in the same tongue. Despite the enmity of the Arab residents at Zanzibar, a Christian quarter grew up on the island. And on Christmas Day, 1873, the foundation-stone of Christ Church, Zanzibar, was laid, Bishop Steere, the energetic head of the mission to whom the Church in East Africa owes so much, himself having 'planned the scaffolding and cording, besides seeing nearly every stone into its place; he had even to teach the masons to distinguish a straight line from a crooked one.'[1]

But the building of the church signified far more than the advance of Christianity into a new land. For the church was built on the site of the old slave market of Zanzibar; and that market, which had been notorious as the largest known centre of the traffic in human beings in Africa, had been closed only six months before the foundations of the church were laid, on the urgent representations of the British Government.[1]

---

[1] The church clock at Zanzibar marked time in the oriental manner, reckoning from the first hour of the morning, not from midnight. This practical method of showing sympathy with an oriental people was much appreciated; it was an example of the wise policy of the missionaries in East Africa, and their care not to alienate public opinion unnecessarily. Had the pioneers of the Church in other lands followed similar tactics they would have been more successful in their work.

Early Missions to the Interior, 1867-75.

The first service that was held at Zanzibar had been concluded with those melancholy words of the Hebrew exiles in Babylon, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' But if some transient feeling of nostalgia affected those on whom the work had devolved, if some natural emotions of sorrow touched those who remembered their fallen comrades in Nyassa, there was no doubt about their enthusiasm for the work itself. The missionaries had not been long in Zanzibar before they looked from the island to the continent; and when they had once grasped the character of the task before them they did not hesitate to act.

To the layman the work might well have seemed too great for any hands to undertake; but the pioneers of Christianity were filled with the faith that could move mountains. And their faith was justified by the success of their work.

Many of them died at their posts, struck down by fever or plague, and remote from the medical help that might have saved them. Others were attacked by the natives; and even though the weapons of resistance were in their hands, they nobly refused to defend themselves, since they were persuaded that the victory they sought must be won by spiritual means alone. Among those who died this martyr's death in Central Africa was George William Atlay, a son of the Bishop of Hereford, and a brother of the talented writer whose biographies of the Victorian Chancellors have added a standard work to the English language. Cut down at the beginning of a career that might have led far, young Atlay was suddenly assaulted and slain by those he had come to save. Had he chosen to use the arms that lay ready to his grasp, he could have overborne his enemies; but true to his principles, he died with a prayer on his lips, as the invisible crown that awaits those who give up their lives for others descended upon him.

---

[1] The treaty was signed on 6th June 1873; but a good deal of illicit slave trading was carried on for some years afterwards.

It was by men of this type that the Christian Church in East Africa was founded; and their character reveals the sufficient reason for its success.

The first move in the new continental campaign was made when a mission was opened at Usambara in 1867. The local chief, who was not unwilling to hear the new doctrine, asked for the white man's medicine against the evil powers of the spirit world. He was promptly told that prayers to the only true God were the one safeguard for white man and black; and with some hesitation he gave permission for the building of a Christian school.

The work progressed in Usambara, and the aid of the missionaries was soon sought to heal the political troubles of the place. Elsewhere at another mission station the white preacher was asked to assume the kingship of the tribe; if he would consent the people promised to become Christians. 'We became Mohammedans,' they said, 'because we had no religion, and the coast people came and taught us theirs; but we dislike them, for they cheat us, and if Christianity is better than Islám, we will follow it.'

These and other like requests showed the progress of the infant church in the esteem of the people; but they showed also that religion could not be altogether dissociated from politics when it came into conflict with other creeds. Already, in fact, the struggle between the religion of Europe and the religion of Asia for the possession of East Africa had begun. The next few years in Uganda pointed that lesson with martyrs' blood; for the moment, however, the real need of the Church of England in East Africa was for statesmanlike guidance and direction.

Happily in Bishop Steere it possessed at its head a man of broad views, of indomitable energy—he tramped the long journey from the coast to Nyassa in 1875—and of great organising ability. 'Beyond and beyond,' he wrote as he looked at the frail outposts of the Church in East Africa, 'lie nation after nation, till the mind is overwhelmed by the vastness of the work. . . . My plan is to cut up the work into manageable portions. We have not to do with broken fragments of tribes; there seem to be nations of several millions each speaking the same language. Our East Africans are not nomads dwelling in a wilderness or desert, but settled cultivators, who would gladly remain for many generations in one place. Each of these nations ought at least to have its own church and its own bishop and clergy. As Africa is now we shall have to fix the site of future cities, as the monks did in England, and the English monks in Germany.'

Exploration of the Interior, 1849-75.

But it was fortunate for the Church that the interior of the continent was no longer an unknown land. The geographical secrets of Africa had been solved one by one by a few unwearied travellers of recent years; blank spaces on the maps no longer mocked and challenged European enterprise. Livingstone had begun the work of exploration. Krapf, a German missionary from Tübingen, who settled at Mombasa in 1844, had penetrated inland as far as the eternal equatorial snows of Mount Kenia in 1849 and 1851. Another German traveller, Von der Decken, visited the country in 1865, and drew up a scheme for founding a Germany colony in East Africa that was perforce postponed until the German Empire in Europe had been hammered from the rough anvil of the Austrian and French wars; but the project was not forgotten by his countrymen.

Some vague mention had now been heard of the native kingdom of Uganda; some rumours also reached the travellers concerning the great lakes far in the interior. These rumours seemed to confirm the ancient tradition, inherited from Greek geographers, that the Nile took its rise in two great sheets of water in Central Africa; and Speke and Grant set out in 1858 to test the truth of the story. The deep blue waters of the Victoria Nyanza and the discovery of Uganda rewarded a toilsome march. Six years later Sir Samuel Baker found the Albert Nyanza; and Tanganyika was already known.

The next step forward was made by Henry Morton Stanley. That intrepid explorer, who had made his way from the Welsh workhouse in which his early years were passed steadily up the ladder of fame, had 'found Livingstone' in Central Africa; a few years later he found the means of introducing Christianity in Uganda.

In the course of his travels Stanley had sojourned with Mtesa, king of Uganda.[1] That monarch ruled a people far less barbarous than the tribes nearer the coast, a people which had made some progress in music and the arts, and had felt the civilising influence of Egypt; and Mtesa expressed his interest in the religion of the white man. Stanley in response described 'the simple story of the Creation, the humble birth of the Messiah, His wonderful life, woeful death, and the triumphant resurrection'; and so well was the story told that for some days 'the seat of justice was converted into an alcove where only the religious and moral law was discussed.'

---

[1] Stanley described Mtesa as 'tall, clean-faced, and large lustrous-eyed'; he was greatly impressed by the king, who certainly showed him every kindness. But Mtesa was a cruel as well as a capricious autocrat. He called himself the 'Causer of Tears,' and lived up to his title; wholesale massacres similar to those in Kumassi sometimes disgraced his court. 'Daily went up the terrible cries of unhappy victims, as they were deliberately hacked to pieces with strips of reed sharp enough to be used as knives, condemned very often for nothing, or merely for some breach of court etiquette. Frequently furnaces were smoking, in which the agonised bodies of persons, innocent of any crimes, were writhing in slow torture till death ended their anguish' (Ashe's *Two Kings of Uganda*). Those Europeans who object to the European domination of Africa are apt to forget that it has stamped out this kind of thing.

So greatly was Mtesa attracted by the recital that Stanley was led to believe the African monarch would welcome European missionaries in his dominions; and the traveller called upon his countrymen to plant the faith on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza. The challenge was accepted; evangelists pressed forward to take up the work; and a chosen party of eight was at once sent out by the Church Missionary Society.

The Uganda Mission, 1877.

The party arrived at Rubaya, the capital of Uganda, on 26th June 1877. Mtesa welcomed them; a mission house was built. The natives were eager to hear the truth of the new doctrines, and flocked to the services; but the success of the work, which later years of trouble and persecution were to demonstrate beyond cavil, was largely due to that member of the mission band whose name will always survive as Mackay of Uganda.

Alexander Mackay came of the sturdy Aberdeen stock which has done so much for the empire and the world. Born in 1849, the son of a Scottish Presbyterian minister, he had been brought up as an engineer; and his knowledge of the craft was turned to splendid account in Central Africa. Stanley's call to preach Christianity in Uganda determined his career; and after rejecting the offer of a good engineering position in Moscow, he sailed with his comrades for the south. Even on the march up to Uganda his value was shown by the construction of a road through the trackless waste of forest and creepers, 'so dense that a cat could scarcely creep along.' In Uganda itself he set up a printing-press, and taught the natives to read their own tongue; his mechanical skill likewise brought him an extraordinary reputation among the people, who cried that 'Mackay was truly the great spirit.' For some time all went well.

But sore trouble was at hand. The enmity of the Mohammedans in the kingdom did not yet indeed touch the Christians, for Mtesa was anxious to learn more of the crafts that Mackay had brought; but early in 1879 two Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in Uganda. Then broke out once again that dissension and enmity of rival creeds which has done more harm to Christianity than all the attacks of its enemies.

Religious Dissensions.

The newcomers were French, and even apart from their creed they had little love for the English missionaries. Mtesa received them in audience, and questioned them closely as to their faith. They answered him that Mackay and his colleagues were entirely wrong in their teaching.

'Has every white man then another religion?' asked Mtesa, perplexed and troubled; but from that time he spoke no more of embracing Christianity. And more unhappy consequences were yet to follow from the strife of creeds.

The French brought with them rifles, powder and shot; the English had only the Bible. In the long run the Bible proved a surer foundation than the weapons of the world; and under Mackay's direction it 'soon became fashionable to learn to read. Lads might be seen everywhere, sitting in groups, or sprawling on the hay-covered floor, all reading, some the book of commandments, some the church prayers, others the Swahili New Testament. Nor were the books and prayers given to them for nothing. They were both ready and eager to buy whatever literature they could get.'

But the Arabs at the court of Uganda were still openly hostile to the Christian intruders. The two parties of Christians were still at enmity with each other; each destroyed the other's work. And Mtesa was capricious, leaning now to either side, but fully determined not to ally himself with any; undoubtedly he had good cause to regret the welcome he had given to Stanley and the interest he had shown in the white man's religion ten years before. Factions had invaded his realm that it was beyond his power to quell; and perhaps he had an inkling of the truth, and foresaw that the independence of Uganda was nearly at an end.

But at least it lasted his time. Mtesa died in 1884, the king of a free kingdom; and Mwanga, his son, reigned in his stead.[1]

The crisis came almost immediately. Alarmed by his fear of European aggression, Mwanga began to persecute the religion that had come from Europe; some of the native Christians were put to death; and when the king heard that the new English bishop of Uganda was travelling towards the Victoria Nyanza, orders were given that he should be assassinated.

Persecution, 1885.

The new bishop was James Hannington, a Sussex man who had held a parish on the moorlands of Devon before he felt the call to Africa. Once already he had gone to the East Coast and been invalided home; but when a sound constitution pulled him through his illness he had volunteered for service again, and been appointed Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa. It was this man, now thirty-seven years of age, whose coming had roused the wrath of Mwanga.

Many signs of danger on his journey warned Hannington of the risks he ran. The tribes were unfriendly; he was attacked and ill-treated; often he carried his life in his hands. But the bishop was of the stuff of which heroes are made. He paid no heed, and pushed forward towards Uganda.

His persistence was his death. On 29th October 1885 Hannington was murdered by the agents of Mwanga. As he died he told his assassins that he was dying for the people of Uganda, and that he had purchased the road to their country with his life.

---

[1] According to Captain Lugard, Mwanga was selected from among Mtesa's sons on account of his personal likeness to his father, 'since in Uganda paternity is often difficult to prove.'

The martyr's prophecy was fulfilled to the letter within less than a decade; but for a while the prospects of Christianity looked black in Central Africa. Severe persecution again broke out in Uganda; only one white man, the intrepid Mackay, remained in the country; and from August 1886 to July 1887, he bore the burden alone.

The Church stands firm.

Mackay was too useful to be molested; but the native Christians had to prove their faith with their lives. Yet in this they were equal to the test. 'It is only our bodies you can kill with your spears,' said one of the converts to his tormentors; 'it is our souls that we care about, and these you cannot touch.' The spirit that can look beyond death can never be conquered in this world; and persecution strengthened rather than harmed Christianity in Uganda. The infant Church passed through its baptism of blood unscathed.

Within a few weeks after the news of Hannington's death had arrived in England, no fewer than fifty men offered to fill his place; and during the twenty years that his successor was at Uganda rapid progress was made. By 1908 there were as many as thirty-two native priests and two thousand five hundred lay workers for the mission.

When such was the vitality of Mackay's work it is little wonder that he should have been indignant at the thought of abandoning it, as some would have done. 'Give up the mission?' he cried shortly before his death on 8th February 1890. 'To whom, ye faint-hearts? To murderous raiders like Mwanga, or to slave-traders from Zanzibar, or to English and Belgian dealers in rifles and gun-boats, or to German spirit-dealers?'

But other changes had come before Mackay's death. Mwanga was fearful of the consequences that the murder of Hannington would bring upon his kingdom; he was afraid of the Christians whom he persecuted, and he disliked the Mohammedans. At length he made a false step in his eagerness to regain his old power, and repudiated both Mohammedans and Christians. The natural result was that the followers of the two creeds combined to overthrow him; the revolution was successful, and Mwanga was deposed on 1st August 1888. It is not without significance that the one and only occasion on which the partisans of Christianity, the religion of Europe, and the partisans of Islám, the religion of Asia, should have sunk their differences was when they united to overthrow a monarch of Africa, the continent which both creeds were struggling to possess.

Full liberty of worship was now proclaimed as the maxim of the state; but the assent of the Arabs to the hated doctrine of toleration was hardly even nominal. Their strength was far superior to that of the Christians; and shortly after Mwanga had been deposed they felt themselves powerful enough to throw off the semblance of alliance with the Europeans. The Christians were attacked, the English and French missions were destroyed; and the missionaries were chased out of Uganda, their ears ringing with the taunt of the disciples of Mohammed, that no white teachers were wanted in the country until the whole people was converted to Islám.

A few months more, however, and Mwanga was restored by the aid of the native army of Uganda; but it was now beyond his power to restore the old conditions in East Africa.

Beginning of European Domination.

Germany had already annexed a large portion of East Africa in 1885. The step was as unexpected and as unwelcome to the British as the similar annexations by the same power in West Africa; but it was too late to protest. The British Government had already refused the offer by the Sultan of Zanzibar of his dominions in 1877; a little more delay, and they would have been ousted from East Africa altogether.

Fortunately private enterprise in England undertook what the Government unaided would never have attempted. Under the auspices of Sir William Mackinnon, the founder of the British India Steam Navigation Company, an Imperial British East Africa Company was formed in 1886 to administer the vast tract of country, much of which was still unexplored, to the north of the German protectorate; and by the terms of the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890, the great inland provinces of Uganda were included in the British dominions four years later, as well as the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba.

Imperial British East Africa Company, 1886.

The British had certainly lost much that might have been theirs had they claimed it earlier; but the territories which they had now annexed were, perhaps, sufficiently large. As it was, their possessions contained, in the words of one of the early administrators, 'nearly all the wonders, most of the extremes, the most signal beauties, and some of the horrors of the dark continent.' The country which had been secured for England was, in fact, almost an empire in itself.

British East Africa.

Its extent was roughly estimated at a million and a quarter square miles; its variety was extraordinary. In some districts of British East Africa palms and dates grew in wild luxuriance, and the soil was of the deep rich chocolate colour that betrayed its fertility at a glance; in others nothing but scrub and sand was to be found. There were vast spaces of dense forest, great stretches of bare desert; while if there were few rivers there were several huge lakes, in two of the greatest of which the greatest river of Africa, the Nile, took its rise. Everywhere nature had worked on a large scale; the land was the home of the lion and the rhinoceros; enormous herds of zebra, hartebeest, and other wild animals wandered over the great spaces; and East Africa became the paradise of the big game hunter.

The inhabitants of this great country were as varied as its natural features. There was a race of pygmies, another race that approached the gigantic; some were of low development, brutal and almost ape-like; others, such as those whom Mtesa had ruled in Uganda, were intelligent, curious, not destitute of native arts and originality, and ready to imitate the arts of the strangers.

The climate was generally healthy; but even in those parts where it was least salubrious it was kindlier than the healthiest parts of West Africa; and the white planters who settled in the uplands found that they were able to keep in good condition for years.

Uganda had moved the admiration of Stanley, who called it the pearl of Africa. The missionaries were equally enthusiastic. And Captain Lugard, who signed the treaty of protection on behalf of the British East Africa Company in 1890, spoke of the place as ‘ one of the embryo empires of an epoch already dawning—empires which, in the zenith of their growth and development, might rival those mighty dependencies which were already the pride of the British race.’

Its value doubted.

But for some time the value of British East Africa was doubted in England. There were many who declared that the country could never be developed, that it was not worth developing, and that its possession would be useless and costly; and when the chartered company charged with the administration discovered that the rule of its vast dominion was more than the limited resources at its command would allow, and announced its intention of withdrawing from Uganda, it was uncertain whether the British Government would take over the work.

The protest of the English missionaries in the most successful mission station of modern times did not at once decide the imperial authorities not to abandon the place; but in the course of the year 1892 the Gladstone Cabinet announced its intention of assuming responsibility for the administration of the whole district.[1] Finally, on 1st April 1893, the Company's flag was hauled down, and the Union Jack was raised in its stead over Uganda.

The controversy which the subject had evoked at least did service to East Africa by drawing attention to its resources; and experience proved that the British Government had done wisely in annexing Uganda. The country fully justified all that its pioneers had said of it; but one great problem had yet to be solved before its value could be proved. Situated as Uganda was in the middle of the continent, isolated and remote from the ocean, the difficulties of transport and communication were stupendous. Its inaccessibility had kept the kingdom on the Victoria Nyanza unknown to Europe for four centuries; the same remoteness might easily prevent it from being more than nominally a province of the British Empire. The cost of carriage, to say nothing of its dangers, would have crippled the prospects of any trade between Uganda and the coast. And it took months for news to filter through from the lake to Zanzibar.

The Uganda Railway.

It was quite evident that a railway from the coast to the lake was essential to the development of British East Africa. It is true that the construction of such a line would necessarily be costly, since it would run through a virgin land, all of which was unsurveyed and much of which was unexplored. It is also true that such a line would have to create the traffic by which it was supported, for hardly any traffic as yet existed between Uganda and the coast. The risks were great; the profits more than doubtful. Private capitalists would scarcely venture their money in so speculative an enterprise without a substantial guarantee from the imperial authorities; if the line therefore was to be built at all it must be built largely or wholly at the Imperial Government's risk and with the Imperial Government's money.

---

[1] Gladstone had himself previously spoken against the annexation of Uganda, although he had not voted against it, which seems to indicate that his mind was not finally made up at the time. He was always quick to defend himself against the charge of inconsistency, which is, after all, not one of the deadly political sins; but in the case of Uganda at least his change of opinion was both timely and wise.

After some hesitation the British Cabinet decided that the line must be built. It also decided to undertake the work itself, and to employ no contractors. The decision was criticised with some reason, on the ground that this method would prove extremely costly, and in fact the capital required for the equipment of the line was found to be not less than five and a half millions sterling. But the work was well done; and it was well worth doing.

Steady progress was made from the day the first rail was laid at Mombasa; but the difficulties of construction were considerable, for the ground had to be cleared of its luxuriant tropical vegetation; heavy gradients had to be surmounted, and it was not always easy to determine the best route through a country so little known. Other unexpected drawbacks lay in the fact that the natives showed a partiality for the materials of the line which was somewhat embarrassing: the swarthy ladies of East Africa found that a length of telegraph wire added considerably to their beauty; while the warriors discovered that a heavy fishplate, a stray rail, or a girder provided a handy and effectual means of settling a dispute with an enemy. In some cases the tribes were inclined to be hostile; but a more regular, and perhaps more dangerous source of ill-will lay in the undisguised dislike of the wild beasts whose haunts were invaded. It was a task of no little difficulty to persuade an infuriated rhinoceros that the engineer was the beneficent agent of an enlightened civilisation.

All these troubles, however, were successfully surmounted, and on 20th December 1901 the first train on the Uganda Railway ran through from Mombasa to the inland terminus at Port Florence, five hundred and eighty-four miles distant.

The opening of the line and the introduction of the electric telegraph in the same year brought the beginnings of a mighty change to British East Africa. Uganda was no longer isolated when it could be reached in forty-eight hours from Mombasa. Curious tourists soon invaded the place with kodak and knapsack; steamers crossed the Victoria Nyanza; sportsmen who thought more of the game than of the natives came and went every season, intent on their bag and their trophies. Not all was gain in this revolution wrought by the railway; not every white man who came up from the coast in search of novelty was a desirable visitor. The natives learnt that there were other types of European besides high-minded missionaries. . . .

Administrative, Social, and Industrial Changes.

But the work of the missionaries still continued with as much success as in the days of Mtesa and Mwanga, if with less startling incidents. And under British rule fundamental changes were now introduced into the country which were at least as important as the change of religion. Slavery was stamped out here as it had been in West Africa. The warrior tribes laid down their arms, and became peaceful cattle-farmers, whose wealth perhaps compensated them for the loss of independence and military glory. And the impartial justice of England replaced the capricious massacres of an African autocrat. The old tribal system which had prevailed before the coming of the Europeans, of giving personal service in exchange for the protection of a chief, was abolished by Sir Harry Johnston, the administrator of Uganda; in its place rent and wages were introduced, and the more doubtful blessing of regular taxation was conferred upon the people.

The standard of living was automatically raised, and the amount of clothing which decency demanded increased; white planters settled and flourished on the fertile soil, and the commercial development of the country began. No minerals were found, but rubber, rice, sugar, cotton and sisal hemp were grown along the tropical coast belt of East Africa with success; while in the extensive highlands of the interior, where a comparatively temperate climate prevailed even under the equator, almost every European crop seemed likely to thrive, and in the year 1911 wheat was sown with every prospect of success.[1] A considerable number of British colonists now prepared to make their homes in a country so suitable for white settlement, and even for white labour; and a new city was founded at Nairobi, on the Uganda Railway, which speedily achieved prosperity. Its growth was as rapid as that of an American township; the seat of government was transferred thither from Mombasa, and ten years after its first hut had risen from the void Nairobi counted one thousand four hundred European inhabitants, several thousand Indians, and a large number of natives.[2]

But the annals of this age are still in the making; the first period of British East African history came to an end when the Uganda Railway was opened in 1901.

CHAPTER III

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN: 1882-1911[3]

It was the deliberate and considered belief of Gladstone, in whose life, and even under whose government so considerable an enlargement of the British Empire took place, that the expansion of European rule over other countries was in itself immoral, that it was brought about by immoral means, and that it should be resisted by those who cared for the good name and the honour of their country.[1] The belief would have had a surer foundation of fact a century earlier, when Europe had not yet ranged itself definitely against the slave trade, and when the interests of subject peoples were less regarded than in Gladstone's day. But although few could dispute that the expansion of European rule over the barbarous districts of Central Africa brought with it an enlargement of the boundaries of civilisation which was of enormous advantage, it was still possible to hold that the methods by which that expansion was achieved were in themselves immoral, altogether apart from their beneficent results. The evil means employed to gain possession, it might have been said, were not excused or justified by the good results of possession; the robber is still a robber although he devotes part of the proceeds of his theft to the founding of a church. That there was some truth in this view could hardly be denied.

---

[1] London *Westminster Gazette*, 20th May 1911.

[2] Those who, like myself, have a perverted taste for recalling unfulfilled prophecies, may amuse themselves by looking up the declarations made by Lord Morley, Sir William Harcourt, and Henry Labouchere that British East Africa could never be profitably developed and the Uganda Railway never pay its way. Fortunately the Liberal party, to which those distinguished politicians belonged, eventually repudiated their predictions when their absurdity became manifest; and in the 1911 Budget of the Liberal Government Lloyd George set aside £250,000 for the development of Uganda.

[3] Authorities.—There is no lack of material. Lord Cromer's great book on *Modern Egypt* is the standard work for nearly the whole period; it should be supplemented by Milner's brilliant study of *England in*

The Morality of Conquest.

Egypt, and Auckland Colvin's *Making of Modern Egypt*. The diplomatic and other difficulties of the time are set cut at length in some two hundred parliamentary blue-books; Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville* is useful in this respect. Blunt's *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* is too prejudiced to be of much use. His standpoint may be judged from his own admission that 'the day of England's empire is fast ending; for my own part I do not care how soon. For a hundred years we have done evil in the world.'

For the Sudan, Wingate's *Mahdism*, a very important work; Boulger's *Life of Gordon*, and the celebrated *Journals of Major-General C. G. Gordon*; with Sir William Butler's *Autobiography*, and Wilson's *From Korti to Khartum*. The period of the Khalifa's control is described in Slatin Pasha's *Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, and Neufeld's *A Prisoner of the Khaleefa*. The Sudan war may be studied in Steevens' *With Kitchener to Khartum*, a brilliant record; Burleigh's *Sirdar and Khalifa*; Atteridge's *Towards Khartoum*; and Churchill's *River War*.

For Somaliland, Captain MacNeill's *In Pursuit of the Mad Mullah*; A. E. Pease's *Somaliland*; C. A. V. Peel's *Somaliland*; Swayne's *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland*, and Augus Hamilton's *Somaliland*.

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, August 1878.

It is indeed the fact that the natives of non-European countries sometimes spontaneously requested Europeans to assume control of their government and their territories.[1] But such cases were few. It is also the fact that in some instances the native ruler was cajoled with a bottle of rum, or a blanket, or a trinket of beads, or tricked by vague promises, or compelled by superior force, to recognise the sovereignty of a European power. Such cases were many; and from the strictly ethical aspect which should, but does not, govern all our actions, they were no more to be justified than an actual war of aggression. Of the latter kind of European expansion also instances were not lacking.

A high-minded statesman, who tries to preserve his consistency in a world of inconsistencies, and to abide by moral principles of action in a universe that cares little what principles are evoked if ultimate advantage accrues; a patriotic ruler, who endeavours to maintain both the immediate prestige and the higher honour of his country amid a welter of struggling interests, must often be unhappily conscious of the contrast between his principles and his actions. Gladstone objected to the expansion of England as immoral; but not one of the British Cabinets which he headed gave up the seals of office without having seen an increase of England's territory. In each case the forces that made for expansion were greater than the men who opposed that expansion.

Gladstone's Prophecy regarding Egypt.

And Gladstone hated the idea of any political connection being formed between Britain and Egypt, a connection which he foretold in 1878 would inevitably lead, if entered upon, to the permanent occupation of Egypt by England, and to the development of a British dominion in Africa whose ultimate extent might stretch unbroken through the continent to Cape Town.

Such were Gladstone's words in opposition; yet four years later the military occupation of Egypt by the government of which Gladstone was Prime Minister was an accomplished fact; and the contradiction between the principle and the action of the British statesman was patent to the whole world. The series of events which led to, and perhaps excused, this contradiction—for immaculate consistency is not the summit level of statesmanship—was extremely curious.

---

[1] See ch. ii. of this bk.; and Rájá Brooke in Sarawak, bk. xv. ch. iv.

Kinglake's Earlier Prophecy.

Gladstone's prophecy, which the nemesis of an unkind fate destined that he should himself unwillingly fulfil, was a remarkable one; but it had been anticipated by a traveller in the East thirty years before. 'Straining far over to hold his loved India,' wrote Kinglake in *Eothen*, that most delightful of all records of oriental travel, 'the Englishman will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit in the Seats of the Faithful.' The words were written early in the Victorian age, at a time when few things seemed less likely than their fulfilment. The direct sea route to the East was still by way of South Africa. The Suez Canal was not yet projected. Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire, whose integrity it was part of the settled policy of every British Government to uphold. And for many years afterwards, while British influence was advancing gradually in West Africa, more rapidly in East Africa, and alternately advancing and receding in South Africa, no such increase of power was observed in the north. The seventeenth-century failure at Tangier had checked British enterprise in Morocco and Algiers;[1] the British expedition that invaded Abyssinia in 1868 to avenge the wrongs of a British subject stormed the heights of Magdala, and reduced the Negus to submission, but sought no territory; and what European influence there was in Egypt was far more French than British. Nevertheless Kinglake's prophecy was to be fulfilled in due course.

---

[1] See vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv. for the British occupation of Tangier.

Napoleon in Egypt, 1798.

The power of the Ottoman Empire had declined steadily since the day when the Turks had retreated from the walls of Vienna, and all Christendom had trembled before the victorious Crescent of Islám. It yet stood proudly in tattered magnificence at Constantinople; but the distant provinces of the empire were unprotected and disloyal. Of those provinces Egypt was the chief, and it was the first to fall under Western influence. The expedition of Napoleon in 1798 brought the Nile within the scope of European politics for the first time since the decay of the Roman Empire. 'Forty centuries,' cried that great general to his soldiers, as they stood beneath the shadow of the pyramids of the Pharaohs, 'look down upon you'; and although the conqueror was forced to return to France, the province he had added to the Republic was not forgotten. Careful directions were left for its government by one who was as able in administration as in war. The people found the yoke of their new Gallic masters lighter than that of sultan or pasha; the finances were restored to order; the conquest seemed permanent, and no thoughts of rebellion disturbed the peace of the conquerors.

But Napoleon had conquered Egypt, not for its own value, but as a base from which to attack the English in India. That opportunity was delayed; and with his return to Europe, officers and men alike began to pine for home. Deprived of the master mind that had led them to victory, no defence was prepared against the English invasion that was sooner or later inevitable; and in 1801 a British army under Abercromby defeated and expelled the French.

The Growth of Foreign Influence.

Egypt reverted to Turkey; and those who had considered Napoleon's enterprise chimerical were apparently justified. But the land of the Nile, the land of paradox, as Herodotus had not unjustly called Egypt, was destined no longer to remain isolated from Europe. The language of France was not forgotten when the French left the country of the Pharaohs; French teachers were welcomed at Cairo, French engineers played a worthy part in developing the industries of Egypt, and some of the more superficial aspects of occidental civilisation were readily adopted in this African outpost of the orient.

The liberal-minded could welcome an invasion of ideas that brought many advantages to Egypt; but another kind of European influence that was steadily growing during these years boded nothing but evil. The government of Egypt was weak, and foreign powers soon claimed privileges and advantages for their subjects which could not be denied. Commercial men invaded the country from all the ports of the Mediterranean, and many of these abused their privileges: they robbed, under more or less transparent devices, their adopted land; and in time the trade of Egypt was largely in the hands of a persistent and often disreputable crew of dishonest alien adventurers.

Khedive Ismail's Extravagance.

These people battened on the country, and tainted it, like blowflies on a round of beef; but they could not ruin Egypt. The ruin of Egypt was accomplished by its ruler, Khedive Ismail, the magnificent spendthrift. He found it easy to borrow in the money-markets of Europe; and he borrowed largely. He sank large sums in advancing Egyptian industry; but through no fault of his, these ventures went wrong. He paid out millions for the building of new palaces for himself, for their furnishing, for the entertainment of his court. The continuous mad orgy of his extravagance raised the Egyptian Debt from three millions sterling in 1863 to eighty-nine millions sterling in 1876; and Egypt was unable to bear the weight of usury which saddled her.

The industrious peasantry of the Nile were taxed almost to the bone to discharge their ruler's borrowings; foreign creditors now pressed the declining government of the Khedive for payment; and Egypt was at once driven to the verge of bankruptcy. To lessen the disaster, Ismail sold his shares in the recently-constructed Suez Canal to England, thereby depriving his country of her natural rights in the great highway to the East. But the half, and at times more than the half, of the revenues from an over-taxed community were still swallowed in paying the interest on the national debt. The foreign creditors now practically ruled Egypt under the form of a Dual Control by England and France; and Ismail was forced to abdicate in 1879.

His son Tewfik, who succeeded him, was Khedive only in name. The young ruler was utterly without experience of state affairs. His mother had been a servant; Tewfik had been brought up more in the harem than in the council, and the harem is not the best school for the formation of a sovereign's character. He possessed none of his father's extravagance; but neither did he possess his father's ability. He was despised by his foreign masters because they had deprived him of power, and by his subjects because he was under the thumb of the foreigner. No more forlorn position has ever been occupied by any prince than Tewfik's; and in his impotence he had recourse to the only refuge of the weak. He sought to obtain by intrigue and favouritism what he could not obtain by open assertion of the rights his father had forfeited; and his weakness led directly to the mutiny of the Egyptian army, and indirectly to the domination of Egypt by England.

The Nationalist Rising.

The spirit of patriotism was not altogether dead on the banks of the Nile, although it was overlaid by centuries of domestic corruption and external suzerainty. For years there had been serious discontent at the exclusion of the native Egyptians from the higher offices of the Egyptian army, and at the reservation of the most important and dignified posts for Turkish nominees. There had long been an equally pronounced feeling against the foreign concession-hunters and speculators of dubious character, who fattened on the fertile soil and levied a scarcely-disguised blackmail on the government.[1] And after the year 1879 the spectacle of foreign creditors openly controlling the finances of the bankrupt state was the final blow to the self-respect of the Egyptians. The foreign control had already, indeed, alleviated their lot in some degree, and in any case they had only themselves or their rulers to thank for the misfortunes that had befallen the country; but the accurate logic of impartial diagnosis rarely accompanies the emotional upheaval of a national revolt.

These accumulated causes of discontent culminated in a popular outbreak in the year 1881. Some of those who groaned under the burden of the late Khedive's debts urged that they should be repudiated. The cry of 'Egpyt for the Egyptians' was raised; and of that cry Tewfik might have taken advantage to free himself from his foreign masters, had he possessed the qualities of a great leader. But his short career had already shown him vacillating and inconstant in his dealings; and an abler man usurped the place to which the young Khedive might have aspired.

Arábi Bey.

Arábi Bey was a colonel of the Egyptian army, a man of some little education and experience, and of considerable although not commanding talents. As a soldier his subsequent record was contemptible; his lack of courage in the field was admitted even by his warmest friends, who deplored that the cowardice of the nationalist leader should jeopardise his cause; but this failing was not known when he assumed the leadership of the malcontents. A religious visionary, his fatalism and his trust in Allah deprived the rebels of the organisation and foresight necessary to a successful revolt; but his ideas of reform, if somewhat vague, were often sound; many of them, in fact, were afterwards put into successful trial by the British Administration. Sprung from the Egyptian peasant class, which had none of the cosmopolitan sentiment that Ismail had made fashionable in Cairo, Arábi Bey was popular among the people, and he placed himself at the head of the popular movement; but his power was not equal to its control when it once gained strength and awakened the slumbering fires of Egyptian patriotism.

---

[1] 'Please shut that window,' Ismail Pasha is related to have said to one of his attendants during an interview with some European concessionaire, 'for if this gentleman catches cold it will cost me ten thousand pounds.' In one case, where a claim of thirty million francs had been made against the Egyptian Government, the impartial Mixed Courts awarded the plaintiff no more than one thousand pounds.—Milner, *England in Egypt*.

The doctrine of 'Egypt for the Egyptians' was translated by Arábi's adherents to mean the plunder and assassination of the foreigner, and the repudiation of the foreign debt. The movement became wholly destructive in its purpose; sanguinary riots broke out in Alexandria, that home of ancient turbulence, and elsewhere; many Europeans were killed, and the government of the puppet Khedive was powerless to suppress the disorder, which was soon avowedly aimed at revolution.

It is uncertain whether Arábi had originally intended matters to go so far. But neither he nor his followers, who were now intoxicated with the prospects of success, had any intention of moderating their aims once they had tasted blood; nor had they any belief in the effective intervention of those European powers whose subjects were being plundered. The foreigner had himself plundered Egypt for years; he was now to be driven from the country, and his goods confiscated for the use of the victorious nationalists.

But there was one flaw in these calculations, and that flaw was enough to ruin the revolutionaries. They were right in their belief that none of the great states of the European continent would intervene. Britain had indeed threatened reprisals; but they knew that the Gladstone Cabinet which was then in power in England was pledged up to the hilt to the policy of non-intervention in foreign affairs, and that

Gladstone had himself deprecated in strong terms any interference in Egypt. They were so inexperienced as to believe in the consistency of a British Government; and they paid the penalty when Gladstone, who had been weakness itself in every other branch of foreign and colonial politics,[1] suddenly decided to act firmly and promptly in Egypt.

Arábi was foolish enough to threaten Gladstone with a Moslem revolt in India, if he should venture to attack the Moslem nationalists of Egypt. But Arábi was not the man to unite the Moslem world in a new crusade against the Christian invader. His name was hardly known to his co-religionists east of Suez; and his influence even in his own country was smashed almost at a blow.

British Intervention, 1882.

Early in the year 1882, a strong British squadron, under Admiral Beauchamp Seymour, anchored before the harbour of Alexandria. The city had been armed and fortified by the nationalists, but Arábi now promised Seymour that the work of strengthening the defences should stop. The operations, however, proceeded unchecked under cover of darkness; but when a British searchlight exposed the Egyptian's lack of good faith, Seymour insisted on some of the forts being surrendered. The demand was ignored, and on 11th July the bombardment of Alexandria began. For five hours, from seven in the morning until noon, the forts answered the fire of the ships; but as the day wore on, all but one of the nationalist guns were silenced.

On the following day a truce was arranged, and Arábi and his supporters escaped into the interior; but a terrible outbreak of patriotic passion resulted in the massacre of some five hundred of the European residents of Alexandria, who had not been wise enough to make their escape, and the pillage and destruction of millions of property. On the

---

[1] See bk. xvi. ch. ii.

14th, however, a British force entered the city, and order was soon restored.

Tel-el-Kebir, 13th September.

But having gone so far, it was necessary to go still further; for if the insurgents were repelled they were not yet defeated. A strong British military force under General Wolseley was landed at Port Said on 15th August; the town of Ismailia was occupied, and rapid forward marches were made. Nine days later Arábi was compelled to abandon his trenches at Tel-el-Kahuta after a sharp fight; and the decisive battle of Tel-el-Kebir took place on 13th September.

On that important day the Egyptians proved themselves possessed of considerable bravery, but of small discipline and little knowledge of the science of war. Hundreds of their men were slain as the British regiments surprised them behind their entrenchments in the early dawn; the defending army, which had numbered some thirty thousand men, at last broke under the irresistible charge and fled into the desert; and before evening the invaders were left victorious on the field.

The Submission of Cairo.

A detachment of cavalry was now ordered to push on during the night twards Cairo; by dawn on the following morning the forty miles of desert road that lay between the battlefield and the capital had been covered, and the small force of five hundred British soldiers proved sufficient to overawe the broken, dispirited nationalists. The daring exploit of sending a mere handful of men to capture a city of three hundred thousand inhabitants justified itself by success; Arábi Bey resigned himself to the victors and to banishment, and the people submitted themselves to the inscrutable will of Allah and the mysterious decrees of fate.[1]

Not the conquered only but the conquerors might have seen the hand of fate, had they so chosen, in the chain of

---

[1] Arábi was transported to Ceylon, but he was allowed to return to Egypt in 1901. He died in 1911.

The Justification of British Action.

circumstances which led to the presence of a British army on Egyptian soil. Four years previously an English Premier who favoured the expansion of the Empire had refused to consider the annexation of Egypt; but now an English Premier who detested expansion had made a definite step forward along a road which he had long foreseen would lead to the creation of a North African province of the British Empire.[1] It is true that Gladstone sincerely disliked the policy on which Disraeli had refused to embark, the policy whose consequences Gladstone himself had so accurately foretold. He had sought the co-operation of every great European power in the enterprise; but Germany, Italy, and Turkey had successively refused. France would indeed have taken her share in the operations had the Gambetta Cabinet been in office; but the Gambetta Cabinet had succumbed to the chances of domestic politics, and its successors fell back on the timid method of non-intervention. From that refusal of France to join forces with England in Egypt sprang long years of regret, of jealousy, of opposition; and very many of the difficulties which menaced the British administrators on the Nile were directly caused by the French politicians who refused to intervene in the first instance, and who did nothing but intervene for the purpose of annoying their rivals for twenty years after.

Gladstone therefore was forced to intervene in Egypt single-handed; and within a few weeks his intervention had gone further than he had wished. He stated indeed that the British occupation was only temporary; but he knew that the position of the Khedive and the safety of the European population of Egypt could not be maintained for a single moment if the army of occupation were withdrawn. Having once put its hand to the plough, without apparently counting the full consequences of doing so, the British Government was unable to draw back; and its subsequent embarrassments and mistakes in Egypt and the Sudan were largely due to the fact that it did not fully realise the permanent results of its action in 1882.

---

[1] See Gladstone's prediction in the *Nineteenth Century*, quoted in bk. xvi. ch. ii. Both Palmerston and Disraeli had refused to take any decisive step in Egypt; but Bismarck had a clearer vision of the future. 'Egypt is of the utmost importance to England,' he said, 'on account of the Suez Canal, the shortest line of communication between the eastern and western halves of the empire. That is like the spinal cord which connects the backbone with the brain.'—Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*.

On the ground of abstract right, it might be difficult to justify the intervention of the British in Egypt; for there was at least as much reason for a nationalist movement in Egypt as in Europe and elsewhere. In the latter cases it was welcomed and encouraged by the British; in the former only was it suppressed.[1] But the world is not ruled by abstract right; and if the government of Egypt by Tewfik or Arábi Bey was a question for the Egyptians to decide, the safety of British subjects, and the security of British financial interests in Egypt was a matter for the British Government. The nationalist movement on the Nile endangered the life and property of every European in the country; and the fact that other nations ignored Gladstone's invitation to join with him in protecting their subjects does not necessarily condemn Gladstone in acting alone.

His intervention was alternately praised and blamed in Britain. Some among his followers threatened a revolt, while the regular Conservative opposition criticised his inconsistency, and gave him no credit for prompt action in a difficult situation. And a loud outcry was raised abroad, especially in the Parisian press, which did not die down for many years.

---

[1] Gladstone denied, in his speech of 25th July 1882, that the movement in Egypt could be called nationalist in any true sense of the word. There is some evidence to support an opposite conclusion, as Lord Cromer admits in *Modern Egypt*; and it could certainly be more easily justified than the Mahdist movement, which Gladstone defended three years later as a righteous struggle for freedom. At any rate the movement of 1882, which was directed against Turkish suzerainty as well as against European control, was more truly nationalist, as Englishmen understand the word, than the nationalist movement of twenty years later, which was almost entirely anti-European and anti-Christian in character, and pro-Turk instead of strongly anti-Turk as Arábi and his associates had been.

Such protests may be disregarded as those of party or international jealousy; more important than these complaints was the fact that on 4th April 1883, a petition, which had been signed by over two thousand six hundred of the European residents in Egypt, was presented to the British Government, praying that the occupation of the country might be permanent.

It might have been well had the desire of the petitioners been granted. But to this the members of the Gladstone Cabinet would by no means consent. One statesman whose name was respected throughout the country, John Bright, resigned his office when force was employed against Egypt. Others became restive whenever the word annexation was mentioned. None had any wish to add Egypt to an empire which, in their opinion, was already far too large; and in any case, definite pledges had been given to the world that British intervention was merely temporary and for the purpose of restoring order.[1] Those pledges were given in all sincerity, and it was fully understood and intended that they should be fulfilled as soon as stable administration was restored in Egypt; but once more the British Government was enmeshed within the chain of unforeseen events, and forced against its will to undertake a policy which it dreaded and distrusted.

The Mahdi and the Sudan, 1883.

For the destinies of Egypt, and of England in Egypt, were to be decided neither in England nor in Egypt. The swift current of revolution, which had overtaken the land of the Pharaohs, was not confined to the Lower Nile; and further south, in those parched bare provinces of the torrid Sudan which the Khedives had conquered but not subdued earlier in the nineteenth century, a new and startling phenomenon now began to sweep far and wide with fire and sword, spreading devastation and barbarism in its course.

---

[1] See the important British Foreign Office Despatch, dated 3rd January 1883.

The instrument of this revolution was of obscure and humble origin; but the reverberations of his teaching were heard in distant lands, far beyond the limits of his knowledge; and the influence of this strange religious genius, whose fall was even more sudden than his rise, are seen like the marks of jagged teeth tearing at the close-knit fabric of European polity in Africa.

There appeared suddenly in the year 1881 in the Sudan a leader who proclaimed himself a successor of the Prophet of Islám. Mohammed Ahmed was sprung from a poor family in the province of Dongola; his father was a religious teacher, and Mohammed himself studied the tenets of his creed under the noted doctors of the day. He laboured hard and meditated deeply at his retreat on the island of Abba on the White Nile, whither he was followed by a few admiring disciples; his humility and piety became equally renowned in the district; and presently he appeared in the new character of a reformer of abuses and a denouncer of the commonly accepted transgressions against the strict law of the Kuran.

His fame spread abroad when it was known that he had rebelled against the laxer views of his religious superior; and it was now seen that there were limits to the spiritual humility of Mohammed Ahmed. His superior offered to forgive the recalcitrant novice; and Mohammed refused the forgiveness.

From that day his reputation was assured; the new leader was at length fairly launched upon his course as a prophet of the true religion. Adherents flocked to the standard of the man who had forbidden his disciples the pleasures of dancing, drinking, and tobacco; for by a strange paradox of the human mind, those who love the comforts of the flesh will always follow and revere the guide who forbids them their indulgence. The harder the path he points to Paradise, the more sure is the apostle that others will prepare to tread it.

The renown of Mohammed grew greater every day; and his ambition enlarged with his renown. Widely accepted as a prophet, he proclaimed himself the true successor of Mohammed the Prophet of God. His followers allowed and applauded the exalted title; and it was soon known that the inspired Mahdi—*He Who is Chosen*—whose mission it was to purify the true religion, was a friend of the poor and an enemy of the Egyptian Government which taxed them.

The mixed motive of politics and piety served the Mahdi well. Thousands of religious devotees were attracted to his standard in a land where every man is a religious devotee. The new prophet may have been either a hot fanatic or a cool impostor; but whatever his motives or his sincerity, he was soon possessed of supreme power over large numbers of the southern Sudanis.

The purpose of the Mahdi did not differ from that of many another crusader who has flashed like a comet across the majestic spaces of history, obscuring for a time the ordinary stars of the human firmament; nor was he for some years unsuccessful. It was his declared mission to convert or destroy the enemies of God; and those were adjudged to be the enemies of God who refused to acknowledge the Mahdi as the supreme representative of the Deity on earth.

His followers did little to convert, but much to destroy, the enemies of the Mahdi. Hundreds of fanatical Dervishes joined the standard of the Prophet; hundreds more joined him out of fear or hope—fear lest their own skins should be endangered, hope that they might assist in the plundering of the infidel.

There were none to check the Mahdi's growing power. The feeble edifice of Egyptian suzerainty crumbled before him. The miserable Egyptian army, untrained and badly equipped, was sent forth to reduce him; but a crushing defeat at El Obeid on 3rd November 1883, scattered the troops of the Khedive in a confusion of panic and death. After a second victory the temporal success of the Prophet seemed assured; and it was probably only the presence of the British Army of Occupation that kept him out of Egypt itself.

Mahdism shatters Egyptian Rule.

Now Egypt did not belong to England; nor did the Sudan in fact any longer belong to Egypt. Nevertheless the attention of British statesmen was necessarily drawn to this new and sinister development; for while the British Government disclaimed all responsibility for the Sudan and denied any permanent interest in Egypt, the dominating facts of the situation contradicted and conquered its policy. The British Army of Occupation was responsible for the maintenance of order in Egypt; and if the Mahdist revolt continued to spread, that army would be responsible for the defence of Egypt against the Sudan.

The Egyptian Government, too, almost bankrupt as it was and without authority either over its own people or the foreigners in the country, was unable to reconquer its lost provinces; and if the Sudan was to be restored to Egypt, it could only be restored by the aid of British troops. If, on the other hand, those provinces were to be abandoned to the rebels, the advice to abandon them must still proceed from the representative of the British Government at Cairo; and a word of advice from the British Consul-General was now equivalent to a command.

Abandonment of the Sudan, 1884.

The word of advice was given. The Sudan was to be abandoned, since Egypt, bankrupt and defeated, could not retain her colony, and had neither the means nor the power, neither the army nor the money, to reconquer it. The Mahdi was to be recognised as master of the country south of Wady Halfa, and the

Egyptian garrisons which still remained at Khartum and other centres were to be withdrawn.

Somebody had to superintend the safe withdrawal of those garrisons, and their safe conduct and protection from the Mahdi on the long retreat down the Nile to Egypt. But none of the officers of the Egyptian army, whose reputation had been irretrievably damaged by Tel-el-Kebir and El Obeid, was known to be capable of so difficult a piece of work ; it was therefore necessary to entrust the retreat to a British officer.

Many officers in the British army would have been equal to the task, difficult though it was. Unhappily the obvious man was chosen, the man who knew more about the Sudan than any other Englishman ; and the obvious man was the wrong man. The tragic fall of Khartum and the death of General Gordon have added an immortal scene of heroism to history ; but it was a scene that need never have occurred, that would never have occurred had a different man been chosen and different instructions been given him.

General Gordon.

Major-General Charles George Gordon, the agent whom the British Government sent to Khartum, was a man who might have walked straight out of the book of Joshua into the nineteenth century. His religion was his life ; his creed ordered every act of his career ; his faith in God was even greater than his great faith in man. These qualities alone would have made Gordon conspicuous in an age whose creed was commerce, an age which weighed its God against its gold and found Him less potent than the dross which He created ; but besides his faith Gordon had a keenness of intuition and a moral force behind his speech which in an earlier epoch would have ranked him among the inspired prophets. And he had more sympathy in his little finger than most of his countrymen in their whole body ; men of every nation loved him, followed him, fought for him, died for him. 'Why should I fear,' he wrote once in a moment of discouragement, 'is man stronger than God ?' Why should we fear, said those whom he led; are our enemies stronger than Gordon? And indeed it seemed that whatever he set his hand to do he did well. He transformed a Chinese rabble into a disciplined army; he fought against slavery in the Sudan, and vanquished it, in the later days of Ismail's rule in Egypt; he would have cleansed the Congo had not this last fatal mission at Khartum been laid upon him. It was this Christian idealist who was sent to conduct the retreat before the new power that had arisen in Islám.

His countrymen, who recognised the hero in the chivalrous soldier, were proud of their ardent Galahad; but they could not know, what those in authority should have known, that there were grave defects which offset these great qualities.

Gordon found it difficult to work with others, impossible to work under others. To take orders was always irksome to him; to obey orders was even more irksome. Stubborn in following his own will whenever duty seemed to point the way, he could not bend himself to the wills of other men.[1] He could lead, but he could never follow; and he was impulsive and changeable even when he led.

Open and frank as a child in all his doings, he was always ready to strip at the husk that hides the kernel of life. He hated the rules of statecraft and the reticences of diplomacy; he despised the regularity and routine of official work, the conventions of politics, the ruts in the great human thoroughfare to which lesser men cling as precedents to guide them into safety. Yet those rules and those conventions have their uses in the world.

It was this man, who found it difficult to work under any master, that was sent to Khartum to work under two masters, the British and the Egyptian Governments. It was this man, who could only be got with difficulty to carry out the most definite orders, that was sent to Khartum to carry out indefinite orders. And to make matters worse, he was first embarrassed with confused and conflicting instructions, and then neglected for months while the enemy closed in upon him. Of all the tragedies of modern times, the mistake of sending Gordon to Khartum was only paralleled by the mistake of leaving him there.

---

[1] Gordon admitted this himself. 'I own to having been very insubordinate to Her Majesty's Government and its officials,' he wrote in his *Journal*, 'but it is my nature, and I cannot help it. I know if I was chief I should never employ myself, for I am incorrigible.'

His Mission at Khartum.

For a while, however, all seemed to go as well as could be expected in the dismal errand of evacuation. Gordon arrived at Khartum on 18th February 1884, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the people whose ruler he had been a few years back. Nor were his first acts likely to dim his popularity. The miserable wretches in the prisons were released. All instruments of torture and the records of old debts were at once burned by his orders; the money-lenders, who are the greatest of the modern plagues of Egypt, were thereby deprived of their fangs.

A proclamation was also issued that the Government would not henceforth interfere with the buying and selling of slaves. This announcement, which probably caused little surprise in Khartum, gave offence in England; but in itself it was no more than a plain admission that slavery, which had existed in the Sudan from time immemorial, and had only been stamped out by Gordon himself less than a decade earlier, would certainly revive as soon as Egypt abandoned the country to the Mahdi.

His Conflicting Instructions.

But it soon became evident that Gordon's dual instructions from the two Governments were conflicting if not actually contradictory. The British Government, in whose army he was an officer, had directed him to 'report on the military situation in the Sudan, and on the measures which it might be advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons holding positions in that country and for the safety of the European population in Khartum.' This was clear enough; but Gordon was also to report on the best means of evacuating the Sudan; to follow the instructions of the British agent at Cairo, Sir Evelyn Baring, who has since become known by his later title of Lord Cromer; and also 'to consider himself authorised and instructed to perform such other duties as the Egyptian Government may desire.' So much for the British Government; the Egyptian Government appointed Gordon Governor-General of the Sudan, and the edict appointing him instructed him to 'carry out our good intentions for the establishment of justice and order, and assure the peace and prosperity of the people of the Sudan.' And the Khedive, in writing to Gordon, after stating that his mission was to withdraw the Egyptian troops and to complete the evacuation of those territories, added that he was to 'take the necessary steps for establishing an organised government in the Sudan for the maintenance of order and the cessation of all disasters and incitement to revolt.'

Whether Gordon was to obey the British or the Egyptian Government was not clear. What was clear was that he could not obey both, for the British Government ordered him to evacuate the Sudan and obey the Egyptian Government's instructions; the Egyptian Government ordered him to evacuate the Sudan and to establish settled government there; to send away the troops and yet to maintain order. He might as well have been told to square the circle.

Another man, and another government, would have cleared up the confusion in a week by an exchange of telegrams. But the British Foreign Office was at that time under Lord Granville, the most feeble, the most dilatory, and the most incompetent Foreign Secretary who has ever mismanaged the policy of an empire; a man who never straightened out any tangle in his life unless he was obliged, a man whose chief occupation was to find a plausible excuse for doing nothing;[1]

---

[1] For instances of Granville's feebleness in West African affairs, see ch. i. of this bk.; and bk. xvi. ch. ii. The most decisive act of his

while Gordon, who hated the idea of abandoning the country which he had lately helped to civilise, decided to construe his instructions in the largest possible manner. 'If Egypt is to be quiet,' he wrote, 'the Mahdi must be smashed up. Mahdi is most unpopular, and with care and time could be smashed. Remember that once Khartum belongs to Mahdi, the task will be far more difficult; yet you will, for safety of Egypt, execute it. Evacuation is possible, but you will feel effect in Egypt, and will be forced to enter into a far more serious affair in order to guard Egypt.'

The spirit of prophecy rang in these words; but Granville had no use for prophecy. Neither had he any use for action; nor would he carry out any of Gordon's suggestions. He waited in London, and Gordon waited in Khartum; and meanwhile the power of the Mahdi grew.

His Prophecy.

Even in March Gordon foresaw the end. 'I will do my best to carry out my instructions,' he telegraphed, 'but I feel conviction I shall be caught in Khartum.' He could easily have escaped, but his sense of duty forbade him; and a few days later the Mahdists began to close round the city.

Now Khartum commands the junction of the White and Blue Niles. It is naturally in a strong position, as the strategic key of the Sudan, and it had been strengthened by many fortifications. But it could not hold out indefinitely without help. Yet nothing was done; no help was sent. The Egyptian Government could not succour the place; the British Government would not. And Gordon would not leave the city, the capital of the province of which he was Governor-General; neither would he resign his post.

Days passed. Weeks passed. Months passed. The British Government refused to move, persisting that the affairs of the Sudan were not its business, although one of its

---

official career was his declaration that the British occupation of Egypt was only temporary; and that proved untrue.

officers was shut up there. The Egyptian Government waited for a lead; and Gordon waited for assistance.

He sent messages, entreaties, threats; but to no purpose. The burning summer passed over the Sudan; and still the Mahdi made headway, and the British Government hesitated to send assistance.

The city and garrison of Berber fell before the Mahdi's troops, and Khartum was henceforth cut off from regular communication with Egypt; but the British Government still refused to be convinced that Gordon was in any danger.

Gordon in Khartum may well have asked why Granville did not act; Granville in London may well have asked why Gordon did not abandon his post. The answer lay in the characters of the two men. Granville never acted unless he was compelled; Gordon never abandoned a position while he had life.

His Dangerous Situation.

At length it became clear even to Granville that Gordon's life was in danger, and that something must be done. No peremptory message of recall was sent; no relieving expedition was despatched. That would have been far too definite and decisive a step for Granville to recommend. But it was announced in Parliament on 8th August that help would be sent to Gordon, if help was found to be necessary. And for the present Granville did not think help was necessary; he never thought anything necessary until too late. Then he would begin to act.

Another fortnight passed. One Cabinet Council after another was held, at which every political question except the situation in the Sudan was discussed; and the Secretary for War, who had become impatient at the continual procrastination, threatened to resign unless the matter was brought to a definite issue.

Still nothing happened; but preparations for relieving Gordon were now begun. And meanwhile the enemy was steadily closing round Khartum.

The Relief Expedition.

A long discussion ensued as to the best military route for the relief expedition to follow. Little trustworthy information was available, and more time was lost while this point was being debated; but at length it was decided that the Nile route was easier than the overland route from Suakim. Lord Wolseley was then appointed to the command of the expedition, and left London on 30th August for Cairo. The distinguished soldier already feared that he had been commissioned too late.[1]

Another considerable delay took place at Cairo before the expedition was ready to proceed up-Nile. Not until 5th October did it start on the long journey to Khartum. And by that time provisions were already low in the beleaguered city; and a difficult road lay ahead of the relievers.

Its Slow Progress.

The advance of the expedition was slower than had been anticipated. The Nile was low that year, and its navigation awkward. Some of the boats were useless, and had to be dragged from cataract to cataract; there was no railway above Sarras, and food was scarce in the desert.

The members of the force worked feverishly to hasten the day of their arrival at Khartum; but do what they could their advance was very slow.

The seriousness of the situation could no longer be concealed, even by the optimistic dawdlers of Downing Street. As late as mid-September, indeed, the Cabinet had hoped that the relief expedition need not advance above Dongola. That idea was subsequently abandoned; and on 4th November Gordon wrote that he could hold out for forty days more, but that it would be hard to keep Khartum beyond that time.

On 14th December he made the last despairing entry in his journal:—

'Now mark this, if the Expeditionary Force, and I ask for no more than two hundred men, does not come in ten days, the town may fall; and I have done the best for the honour of our country. Good-bye. C. G. GORDON.

---

[1] See statement in *Autobiography of Alfred Austin*.

'You send me no information, though you have lots of money.
'C. G. G.'

The Last Message from Khartum.

Some few days later Wolseley received a message from Khartum that food was running short, and the rescuers must come quickly; and that was all. No more messages came from General Gordon.

It was now January 1885, and the limit which Gordon had put to his resistance was overdue. Omdurman, the outpost of the city on the other side of the river, fell; but Khartum still stood, although attacked daily by the Mahdi; and the relievers still crept on across the sands of the desert, and along the waters of the Nile.

Gordon begins to despair.

But in Khartum corpses now lay about the streets, the bodies of men who were dead from lack of food, not from the bullets of the enemy. And Gordon's hair had turned white with care, and his heart was sick with hope deferred. 'What more can I say?' he cried in despair. 'I have nothing more to say. The people will no longer believe me. I have told them over and over again that help would be here. But it has never come, and now they must see I tell them lies.'

Wild Rumours of his Fate.

All that month in England the feeling of painful anxiety as to the fate of Gordon grew stronger. The wildest rumours were now prevalent in London. Some reports averred that he had died sword in hand in one last desperate sortie. One account stated, without the least basis of truth, that he had been converted to Islám and had joined the Mahdi. Another rumour had it that he was safe.[1]

In the last days of January joyful news was published in the papers. The relief expedition was said to be at the very gates of Khartum; Gordon was to be relieved in a few hours, if indeed he was not already relieved; the Mahdi would be beaten back, and the honour of England and Egypt saved.

---

[1] See the files of the London *Times*, *Globe*, *Daily Chronicle*, and *Daily News*.

The news was false. Gordon was already dead. Khartum had already fallen. And the British Government had muddled and delayed until it was too late.

Fall of Khartum.

On 26th January 1885, six weeks later than the date which Gordon had given as the limit of his power of resistance, Khartum was attacked. It fell, and Gordon perished; but no man knows the manner of his death.[1]

The Death of Gordon.

It is said that he met his enemies as he stood at the head of the stairs of the palace of Khartum; that he faced them with his sword in one hand, and his revolver in the other, and dressed in a white uniform that made him conspicuous in the crowd of blacks around him and below him. It is believed that the assault took place a little before sunrise, and that he was shot down before he could defend himself; and at first there was a rumour, which was afterwards discredited, that the city had been betrayed by a traitor within the gates. But these are no more than suppositions: the one thing is certain that Khartum fell and Gordon perished.

The trunkless head of the fallen general was brought in triumph to the Mahdi; his body became a target for the rude swords of the conquerors. And Khartum was now given up to slaughter and carnage: women were outraged; men were tortured to discover their treasure, flogged until the flesh hung down in shreds, or tied by the thumbs to a beam until they were unconscious. Only the better looking male and female slaves were spared for the harems of the victors.

And two days later the advance guard of the relief expedition came in sight of Khartum—two days too late.

---

[1] Many accounts have been published of the death of Gordon. But none of them are by eyewitnesses; all contradict each other in material points, and none can be accepted as trustworthy.

Help arrives too Late.

All they saw before they turned back with the sorrowful news was ‘masses of the enemy with their fluttering banners, long rows of riflemen in the shelter trenches, the bursting of shells, and the water torn up by hundreds of bullets and heavier shot.’ No flag was flying over the palace; and the relievers knew that no earthly succour could now avail him who had always looked to God and not to man for help. Man had failed him at the last.

A little later, an Arabic message was picked up in the desert. It said, ‘On the night of 26th January the army of the Mahdi entered Khartum and took the forts, city, and vessels in the river; the traitor Gordon was killed. Inform your troops of this signal triumph which God has given to the arms of the Prophet of His Prophet.’ In the unending struggle between Christianity and its ancient foe in Africa, in a fight where a typical Christian was pitted against an able Mohammedan, the forces of Islám had again prevailed.

When there was no longer any doubt of Gordon’s fate, an agony of grief and remorse overwhelmed England; but grief and remorse cannot restore the dead. The faults of Gordon were all forgotten; he became a national hero; nor was he perhaps unworthy of his fame. And the Gladstone Government, which had muddled his life away, could make no headway against the popular indignation. Its members shortly afterwards resigned their offices, having made an effort to exculpate themselves which the nation was in no mood to hear.

The general voice of contemporary opinion condemned the Government; nor will the calmer verdict of impartial history hold Gladstone and his dilatory colleagues free from blame, although on somewhat different grounds.[1] It is more than doubtful whether they were wise in sending Gordon to Khartum at all; and indeed they do not appear to have given much thought to his selection in the first instance, or to his mission subsequently. But having sent him to Khartum, they should have seen that his instructions were clear. Having discovered that he proposed going beyond their instructions and their wishes, they should either have recalled him at once, or prepared to support him to the utmost; but instead of that they did nothing for months, and then only sent a relief expedition grudgingly. When a government sends the wrong man on a dangerous errand, allows him to have contradictory instructions, and neglects to support him, a disaster is inevitable.

---

[1] Gladstone had to bear the brunt of the blame as head of the Government; but his personal responsibility was small. He was not present at the meeting which decided to send Gordon to Khartum, although he acquiesced in the decision; and subsequently he wished to recall Gordon,

The Mahdi also Dies.

There was talk in England of revenging Gordon, of 'smashing the Mahdi'; but the Mahdi did not long survive his victim. A few months later he was dead of typhus in Khartum.

But Mahdism Continues.

But Mahdism did not perish with the Mahdi. The commander-in-chief of Mohammed Ahmed proclaimed his appointment as successor of the Prophet; the Sudan obeyed the new Khalifa; and Egypt could not recover her lost territories. And now that Gordon was dead and the British relief force had failed, England had for some time no stomach for further adventures in that disastrous region of bitter memories and sad regrets.

Mahdism, in fact, continued to dominate the Sudan, not because it was the best, but because it was the strongest

---

but allowed himself to be overruled. It was one of the few occasions on which the masterful head of the Cabinet gave way to his colleagues; bitterly must he have regretted that he did not insist on his wish being carried out. But he appears not to have devoted much attention to the Egyptian question in 1884, and to have deceived himself into the belief, which a more thorough enquiry would have shown to be baseless, that Gordon was in no danger. It was Granville's duty, as the minister in charge of Egyptian affairs, to have pointed out the urgency of the situation. But Granville was not the man for that kind of work. It fell to Gladstone as Premier to defend the Government's action. By universal admission his defence was unconvincing.

available rule. Like all Mohammedan empires, its fundamental appeal was religious ; like most Mohammedan empires in Africa, its real character was that of a military despotism. Nothing but the latter could have ruled the wild tribes of the Sudan and the Upper Nile ; nothing but the former could have made its subjects fight for it as they did to the last.

The Strength of Mahdism.

But while the rapid success of Mahdism was typical of Mohammedanism in one of its most convincing aspects, there was a far weaker side to the new rule. It had none of the grandeur and comprehensiveness of the older Mohammedan empires in Africa ; nothing but the innate weakness of brute strength reinforced by ignorance. It was so false that it could not impose on those who saw it at close quarters ; so tyrannical that it was hated by those who surrendered to it ; so foolish that it destroyed the very foundation of its power by destroying most of the few towns and villages that marked the wastes of the Sudan.

Its Weakness.

The original prophet of Mahdism might pose as an ardent reformer of evil, as a puritan whose mission it was to change the world and the hearts of his followers. But the voice of scandal had not spared his private life ; and his successors were known to indulge in every lust of the flesh. The contrast between the theory and practice of Mahdism was visible to its ultimate conquerors ; it cannot have been less visible to its adherents in Khartum.

And Mahdism was essentially a rule of terror and destruction. It is estimated that more than half the total population of the Sudan perished in thirteen years under its sway. Whole tribes were destroyed by its savage fury, the men massacred by thousands, the women reserved for the harem of the conquerors. It seared everything it touched with its fiery hand. Nothing but the walls and houses of Berber were suffered to remain after that city had fallen to the Mahdi ; the place was only ‘ a sun-dried skeleton of a city,' said an Englishman who visited it, 'acres and acres quite dead and falling away, not a single soul in the whole desolation. . . . But there were bodies—bodies left thirteen years unburied.'

Other places bore visible marks of the terror of Mahdism, bones and skeletons in deserted houses, 'in every courtyard the miserable emblems of panic and massacre; dead camels and donkeys across every lane, dry, but still stinking. . . . Everything dry and silent, silent. The stillness and the stench merge together and soak into the soul, exuding from every foot of this melancholy graveyard, the cenotaph of a whole tribe, fifteen years of the Sudan's history read in an hour.'

But such as it was, Mahdism had come to stay until a stronger should oust it; and for years there was no sign of any change in the Sudan, now fast relapsing into barbarism. In the first few months of despair after the fall of Khartum the talk of 'smashing the Mahdi' grew steadily less in England; and on 11th May 1885, a month before the Mahdi died, it was definitely announced by the British Government that no further expeditions would be authorised into the Sudan.

For a full decade that policy remained unchanged; but one great reason among many minor considerations led to its eventual reversal. The Sudan was in every way a poor country, its soil little but desert sand; but through the Sudan flowed the Nile, the perennial giver of life to Egypt, and therefore the control of the Sudan was ultimately necessary to Egypt.

And in the last years of the nineteenth century an advance movement was made up the Nile, and the world knew that the time had come for England to restore the Sudan to Egypt, and to avenge the death of Gordon. And in the mechanical precision of the brilliant campaigns that led up to the final victory at Omdurman the world also recognised that England had found the man to do her work.

The thirteen years that elapsed between the fall and the recapture of Khartum were years of preparation for the reconquest of the Sudan. The quality of the old Egyptian army, which had fled from the Mahdists without striking a blow, was so hopeless that it was disbanded; and it was therefore necessary to create a new one before any forward movement could be contemplated. There were those who predicted that the task would prove an impossible one, who said that the Egyptian had never made, and would never make, a soldier. That he had never made a good soldier was true enough; but no man ever makes a good soldier who is wretchedly paid, often not paid at all, confined as a conscript in filthy barracks, and led in chains, an unwilling combatant, to the field of battle. Such was the Egyptian army under the old rule; but a handful of British officers proved that it only needed fair treatment, good leadership, and training to change the laborious peasant of the Nile into a brave man, who would follow his colonel under any conditions of fatigue and hardship.

The New Egyptian Army.

The first regiments of the new Egyptian army were formed after the disaster of El Obeid. The numbers were limited to six thousand, and it was still a conscript army; it was therefore possible to pick the best men available. Other regiments were subsequently raised; and these, stationed at Wady Halfa on the southern frontier of Egypt, proved their mettle in skirmishes with the Mahdists; even in serious engagements the new force acquitted itself creditably.

The Egyptian soldier, like the Egyptian peasantry from whom he was recruited, was willing and patient; another constituent of the new army that was destined to reconquer the Sudan bore a very different, but not less useful, character. Sudani negroids were enrolled in the force; and these men, whose trade was fighting, and whose ambition it was to die facing the enemy, had the dash and go which the Egyptians lacked. The Sudanis were all anxiety for a forward move, and many of them, who had lost all their possessions in the Mahdist conquest, had the best of reasons for wishing to put their hands on the Khalifa's throat. Ready to wage barbaric and bloody war, it was their boast that, like the Mahdi's troops, they neither gave nor accepted quarter.

The new force was hammered into shape by three successive Sirdars of the Egyptian army. Sir Evelyn Wood and General Grenfell, the two first commanders-in-chief, were denied the satisfaction of leading their troops to victory; but they saw them face the northward rush of the Mahdists from the Sudan and stand firm. And Herbert Kitchener, the third Sirdar, led the advance that was to avenge Gordon.

Kitchener of Khartum.

The destroyer of Mahdism was a man of altogether different character from Gordon, its chief victim. Both were good soldiers. But Gordon was impulsive, reckless, changeable, and inconsistent; Kitchener never varied in his aim, and he worked towards his end with the exactitude and the amazing certainty of a drilling machine. If he was not loved by his men as Gordon was loved, he was trusted as none but great generals are trusted. If he was not a figure that easily struck the popular imagination, if he had no gift of wholesale magnetism,[1] he possessed, on the other hand, the power of organisation in a superlative degree. Nothing seemed to be forgotten in his calculations; no detail escaped him. The climate, the transport, the railway, the Nile steamers, the camels, the food, tents, clothing, arms, discipline, the strength of the enemy, the weak points of his own force; all the multitudinous aspects of a campaign—none were too petty to engage his personal attention.

In the 'steady, passionless eyes' of the Sirdar, set, as one observer described him, in 'a face that neither appealed for affection nor stirred dislike,' nothing was irrelevant that might affect the result. Firm and loyal in private friendship, he disdained the weakness which allows private feelings to enter public business; none were employed by him save those who were as zealous, as strong, and as ready as himself to use up the last ounce of their zeal and strength in the service.

---

[1] 'Kitchener did not then possess that measure of the confidence and affection of his officers which his military successes have since compelled.' —Churchill's *River War*.

Gordon was something of a prophet as well as a soldier; Kitchener was a prophet too, but with a difference. He did not publish his predictions; he fulfilled them.

For years he had persevered in the creation of the new Egyptian army; for years it had seemed to onlookers a hopeless task. But not to Kitchener, who saw the sterling qualities of his troops proved in skirmishes and guerrilla combats with the Mahdists that won little attention from the outside world.

The War against Mahdism Renewed, 1896.

And in 1896 the opportunity came for the new Sirdar, then a man of forty-six, to prove the strength of the weapon he had helped to forge. The first stage of the advance on Khartum was begun soon after the Italian army had suffered a serious reverse from the Abyssinians at Adowa—an event which gravely diminished European prestige in Africa, and was in consequence expected to lead to a dangerous revival of Mahdism. It was largely in order to counteract this expected revival that the strong British Government, which had come into office under Lord Salisbury in 1895, ordered an advance on Dongola as a preliminary to the reconquest of the Sudan.

The Capture of Dongola, 1897.

The initial step was completely successful. The Dervishes were surprised at Ferket on 6th June 1897, and that portion of the Mahdist army was destroyed. But the advance that had been planned on Dongola was delayed by a series of accidents which only patience could surmount. Cholera broke out among the troops, and nearly a thousand men died before the epidemic spent its force. Heavy rain-storms flooded the country, and the railway, which was essential to the supply of the army, was washed away. When this was repaired the gunboats that were used in the expedition to bombard the Mahdi's forts had to be drawn above the cataracts—a dangerous operation—and one of the steamers burst its boiler, and had to be abandoned.

The Sirdar's good luck had been proverbial among his troops; but these untoward events seemed to show that his luck had deserted him at the very outset of the campaign. It took all Kitchener's resourcefulness to pilot his army safely forward; but after a few weeks' delay the advance was again ordered, and Dongola was soon in sight.

Here the Mahdists made a poorer fight than had been expected. The place was surrounded and shelled by Kitchener's army; it capitulated tamely on 23rd September 1897.

The first stage of the reconquest was over; but it now became necessary to call a long halt before the decisive advance towards the headquarters of Mahdism could be made. At this point the Nile makes a long arm in its course, throwing out a huge elbow towards the Sahara; and if this considerable bend of the river were not to be followed by the expedition, it would be necessary to build a railway across the desert between Dongola and Abu Hamed. Expert engineers were consulted; they unanimously condemned the scheme. Military men shook their heads. Kitchener listened attentively to the adverse opinions of both, and then took his own counsel. The construction of the railway was ordered to be begun.

It proved a difficult but by no means impossible piece of work. Over a mile a day was laid, and before the line was finished an advance column under General Hunter captured Abu Hamed. Soon afterwards the unexpected abandonment of Berber by the Dervishes enabled the army to push on for some way practically without opposition.

So far there had been little serious fighting; but what little there was had shown the calibre of the Sirdar's army. His troops were now put to a severer test.

The Battle of Atbara, 1898.

Beside the River Atbara the Mahdists were discovered in force, some eighteen thousand strong. Against these Kitchener had about twelve thousand men, and his army had been reinforced by a brigade of British cavalry regiments. The Mahdists were believed to be capably led by Mahmud, the conqueror of Berber; they had the advantage of the position, but it was not known whether they would be content to rely on defensive tactics, or would rush out, as was their wont, against the enemy.

On Good Friday, 7th April 1898, the two armies faced each other. The Mahdists were sheltered behind a *zariba*, a rough camp of thorn-bushes, and it was soon seen that they did not intend to come out. For an hour and twenty minutes the Anglo-Egyptian artillery poured a steady fire into their ranks; then the order was given to charge. The *zariba* collapsed before the onslaught; the stockade and trenches were stormed. Within those trenches were thousands of Dervishes, who had stood the murderous fire into their camp without flinching; a wild hand-to-hand, bayonet-to-sword encounter followed. The Sirdar's men prevailed in the medley of forces; and soon the Mahdists were scattered before the coalition army of Egyptians, Sudanis, Highlanders, and Cockneys; the first decisive battle with Mahdism was won.

The Anglo-Egyptian loss was eighty-one killed and four hundred and ninety-three wounded; the army of Mahmud was dispersed, much of it destroyed, and Mahmud himself was a prisoner. 'Are you the man Mahmud?' asked the Sirdar, when the captive appeared before him. 'Yes; I am Mahmud,' answered the defeated general, 'and I am the same as you'—alluding to his position at the head of the army. 'Why did you come here to make war?' continued the Sirdar. 'I came because I was told—the same as you,' replied Mahmud. With these simple but not undignified words, the Mahdist general accepted his reverse.

There was now another pause before the final advance was made on Khartum. Once more the Sirdar's army was strengthened by the arrival of additional British troops; three months were allowed to overcome the difficulties of transport; and in the middle of August the march to the south was renewed.

Towards Khartum.

All was working with the usual automatic accuracy that marked Kitchener's military movements; but there was room for many a slip in the calculations, and much depended on the Khalifa. If he attacked the Anglo-Egyptian army he was practically certain to be defeated, although it was not known how many thousands of men he had at his back. If, on the other hand, he remained in Khartum, the attack of his enemies would be subject to greater difficulties; but few doubted that the invaders could reduce the place. In either case Mahdism would be defeated, and probably destroyed as a fighting force; but if the Khalifa retreated to the south, to those barbarous lands between Uganda and the junction of the two Niles where no European army had yet penetrated, he might yet save Mahdism. He would be forced indeed to resign a large part of his power, for the loss of Khartum and Omdurman meant the loss of the Sudan; but it was by no means certain that the British Government was prepared to send its troops after him if he retreated to the heart of Central Africa. And in that event his defeat would have been deprived of half its value.

But neither Omdurman nor Khartum had yet fallen; and events showed that the Khalifa expected to hold them both against Kitchener. What were his inmost thoughts in those last days of his rule there is no Mahdist historian to relate; but his actions proved that the Khalifa believed the Dervishes more than a match for their enemies.

On the 30th August a Dervish horseman rode up to the

British lines, and hurled his spear over the advancing army with a defiant shout of 'Allah' before he rode away into the desert. And already the Mahdist patrols had been seen: it was clear that the decisive hour was at hand.

On the first day of September the invaders saw the capital of Mahdism in the distance. The tomb of the Mahdi was conspicuous among the mud huts of Omdurman; somewhat further off was the palace of Khartum, where Gordon had died thirteen years back, a few hours before succour had arrived. And every man's heart burned within him as he thought of avenging the hero of England.

The Battle of Omdurman, 1898.

The army encamped before Omdurman, and some feared that the Khalifa might attack by night. A camel stampeded within the lines, and the momentary panic that broke out among some Sudani servants showed how dangerous an assault by dark might be: but no assault came. On the following day, however, the Khalifa attacked in force, and by so doing threw away his last chance of avoiding defeat. Mahdism involuntarily committed suicide when it came out into the open against Kitchener.

At half-past six on the morning of the 2nd of September the white mantles and dark faces of the Mahdist host were seen advancing in force against the British. 'They came very fast, and they came very straight; and then presently,' wrote an onlooker, 'they came no farther.' For the British rifles had vomited death, and their cannon spoken with the voice that kills before it can be answered. A rigid line of Dervishes would gather itself up and rush forward with incredible bravery; then it would suddenly quiver and stop—the line unbroken but its units dead.

Time after time the attack was renewed; time after time the men went down. Hundreds and even thousands had their lives torn out of them in that pitiless fire.

Three hours the wholesale, unavoidable slaughter lasted. But the battle was not yet over. One wing of the British army on the right was hard pressed by the Mahdists; but the ranks stood firm. And on the left a cavalry regiment that had never been in action before won public fame, but not military approval, by the extraordinary courage of a mistaken charge against the enemy.

Three hundred and twenty men of the 21st Lancers were ordered to reconnoitre and, if possible, to head the Mahdists away from Omdurman. Their scouts reported the ground clear ahead; but as they rode forward they discovered within two hundred yards of them a large body of Dervishes hidden in a ravine. At once the colonel of the regiment gave the order to charge; and three hundred men advanced at a gallop against three thousand.

They cut clean through the enemy, and came out on the other side, as a sharp knife cuts through a sheet of tin; but they bore the marks in jagged wounds. Men and horses were pulled down as they grappled with the Mahdists in the ravine; lances were thrust and broken, swords drawn, pistols fired, reins cut, legs hamstringed; but out on the other side the Lancers came—those that were still alive to come out.

Sixty men of the three hundred were killed or wounded; over a hundred horses had fallen. The regiment had rushed itself into glory in its virgin charge; but if every regiment had sought and found that kind of glory in the past campaign the Sirdar's army would never have set eyes on Omdurman.

Other regiments of the invaders were at times hard pressed. At least one serious assault was only saved by the coolness of General Hector Macdonald, 'Fighting Mac,' as his men loved to call him. But still the day went steadily in Kitchener's favour although the Mahdists fought desperately.

The Khalifa's banner was defended with almost superhuman resolution by his own personal bodyguard. In the end over eleven thousand Dervishes were left dead on the field, sixteen thousand were wounded, and four thousand were taken prisoners in this last bloody battle of the Sudan War.

But it was in vain that brave men sacrificed themselves for a dying cause. They were overborne; and when the Khalifa rode back to Omdurman that night a defeated man, there rode back with him no more than the ghost of a dead empire.

The Fall of Mahdism.

For Mahdism was dead, and Kitchener had killed it. The religious zeal of the East had come into contact with the scientific organisation of the West, and it had perished.

Nor did any do its memory reverence. The very troops who had been ready to fight to the death for Mahdism the day before, now transferred their allegiance to Kitchener when they saw the Khalifa's cause was lost. The people of Omdurman gave their conquerors friendly greeting when the city obeyed the Sirdar's summons to surrender. Mahdism was dead; but the tyranny of its rule had left it unlamented.

And Gordon was avenged. His body had no burial that men knew of, but his destroyers were themselves destroyed. An act of tardy homage was done to the dead man when Kitchener and his staff attended a memorial service at Khartum a few days after the fall of Omdurman; a more abiding record was founded when a Gordon Memorial College was begun at Khartum, and the beginnings of a Christian cathedral arose in the late headquarters of Mahdism, a few miles only from the spot where an ancient temple of the Christian faith had been overwhelmed by the first irresistible advance of Mohammedanism thirteen centuries before.

The Khalifa fled to the south. Had he retreated before his defeat he might yet have caused some trouble. But after the battle of Omdurman he had no authority and hardly any following.[1]

An act was now committed by the victors which evoked much adverse criticism in England. The Mahdi's tomb was destroyed; his dead body was dug up and decapitated.

---

[1] Fourteen months later the Khalifa was overtaken near Gedid. His few adherents were taken prisoners; the Khalifa himself was slain.

None could mistake the meaning of this contemptuous demonstration that the late Prophet of the Sudan was a false prophet; and it probably rendered vain any attempt to revive Mahdism or to elevate the tomb into a sacred shrine. In that sense it was perhaps a necessary although certainly a regrettable deed; but those who condemned it, not altogether groundlessly, as a barbarous act, forgot that no other means would have proved so conclusively to the barbarians of the Sudan that the power of Mahdism was utterly broken.

Firmness of British Policy.

The Sudan had beaten Gordon and Wolseley; Kitchener beat the Sudan. But apart from the relative military abilities of these commanders, it must be remembered that Kitchener had two great advantages over his predecessors. He could choose his time for action and advance, where they could not; nor was he neglected by a vacillating British Government, but strongly supported throughout. Kitchener could not have succeeded under Lord Granville, nor would Gordon perhaps have failed under Lord Salisbury. The difference between Salisbury and Granville was the difference between granite and cheese; and under Lord Salisbury's firm hand England had at last decided on her North African policy.

That policy was to stay in Egypt and to reconquer the Sudan; and it was carried out.

The real fault at the root of Granville's Egyptian policy had been that it was not in fact a policy at all. Granville was led against his will throughout; he was never a strong enough man to influence the course of events instead of letting the course of events influence him. He did not wish to intervene in Egypt; yet he intervened. He did not wish to occupy the country; yet he occupied it. Having occupied it, he wished that occupation to be temporary; but unwittingly he laid the foundation of its permanence. He did not wish to abandon Gordon to his fate; but he abandoned him.

Salisbury, on the other hand, knew what he wanted; and being a strong man, he obtained his wish. The French opposed him, partly on the general principle which animated French policy in those days, that it was a good thing to oppose England; partly on the more solid ground that the presence of England in Egypt and the Sudan limited the scope of the rapidly-growing French Empire in North Africa. But this opposition only strengthened Salisbury's hand. Before the Sudan campaign began the French objected to the revenues of Egypt being applied to such a purpose. The result was that Britain declared herself ready to finance the expedition. And after the campaign was over a French exploring expedition was found to have penetrated through Central Africa to Fashoda, higher up the Nile than Khartum. Its leader, Colonel Marchand, announced his intention of staying there; the French Government announced its intention of supporting him. For some days the situation was serious, and there was imminent danger of war between Britain and France; but in the end the French gave way, mainly, it was understood, owing to the overpowering strength of the British Navy.

Those two episodes, which in the hands of a Granville would have led to a hurried abandonment of the British plans and claims, were utilised by Salisbury to strengthen the British position in Egypt.

British Somaliland, 1884.

Another example of the relative advantages of not knowing and of knowing what one wants was provided by almost the same country and period, in the miserable annals of British Somaliland. That desert district, which borders on the Indian Ocean, was annexed by Britain in 1884 on the cessation of Egyptian control over the Somali tribes. Lying on the direct road to India, it was of considerable strategic importance; but, administered successively by the Indian, Foreign, and Colonial Offices, the protectorate was always something of an incubus. The expenditure was invariably greater than the revenue, in spite of the growing trade of the towns along the coast; the deficit had to be made good by annual grants from the Imperial Treasury, which did not commend Somaliland to the grumbling taxpayer in England. And a further embarrassment was occasioned by the rise of a native ruler over the Mohammedan tribes of the interior, who was dignified by the title of the Mad Mullah. Mad he may have been, but not mad enough to be caught by the British; and this pale reflection of the Mahdi was a continuous source of trouble. Successive Cabinets undertook and abandoned military operations against him, the difficulties of a desert country and the great cost of an expedition being constant factors in the Mullah's favour. No definite policy either of conquest or retirement was adopted until 1910, when the Asquith Government decided that enough money had been thrown into the desert. If that decision was justified—and it was not generally criticised—the only fault that could be found was that it was not arrived at sooner. The British maintained their hold on the coast; the Mullah retained his hold on the interior.

The British in Egypt, 1883-1910.

But alongside the reconquest of the Sudan and the ineffective occupation of Somaliland, another work had meanwhile been going forward of greater importance. While Kitchener and the new army were beating back barbarism on the Upper Nile, another body of men were achieving hardly less needed civil reforms on the Lower Nile.

The first years of the British occupation of Egypt contained little that was pleasant or profitable or glorious to either party. The Egyptians were excessively discontented with their lot, and they had some reason to be. And not unnaturally they turned much of their resentment against the foreigners who practically owned Egypt against the British, who had a visibly greater share in its destiny than any other Europeans.

But apart from this, these were indeed evil years for Egypt and for the English in Egypt. There was the shame of the Egyptian defeat at El Obeid; the shame of the British defeat at Khartum. The debts of Ismail still pressed heavily; taxation was still a burden, and Egypt remained the sport of international politics, the ancient land of paradox that lay half within and half without the modern British Empire, the land where East and West met, where men talked the tongue of Paris and followed the religion of Mecca.

But as if these things were not enough, other misfortunes fell upon the luckless land. The sanitation of Egypt was not more advanced than that of most oriental countries; its medical resources would have been thought primitive by a Sangrado. In these circumstances the outbreak of cholera in the summer of 1883 speedily reached the proportions of a frightful epidemic. Many hundreds of people died; many of those who recovered were ruined.

Cholera, 1883.

Political troubles followed thick and fast upon disease. The position of the British in Egypt was anomalous, and it was subject to all the inconveniences that arise from indecision and vacillation. Nobody knew how long the British would remain in Egypt; the British Government itself did not know. It contemplated withdrawal at the earliest possible moment, and said so; but nobody knew when that moment would arrive. Those alone who imagined that the earliest possible moment for evacuation would never come, those alone who believed that the temporary occupation would gradually become permanent, were correct; but their prophecies were derided alike by the British and the Egyptians, by the jealous French, the indifferent Germans, and the sullen Turks.

Political Uncertainty.

Twice in these years did the British Government discuss at international conferences the date of its retirement from Egypt. Twice did the projects of evacuation fail.

Both political parties in England disliked the connection, which indeed was a source of weakness and expense at that time, and a vulnerable point of attack in international affairs; but in the end the larger destiny prevailed here as in the Sudan, and England put her shoulder steadfastly to the work that was waiting to be done in Egypt, the work that Egypt was unable to do herself. The people of the Nile at least have had no reason to regret that the earlier pledges of withdrawal were not fulfilled.

Lord Cromer.

Among the men whose capacity and goodwill Gordon had distrusted and misjudged during those last unhappy months when the deserted General had so much reason to distrust his fellows were two who took the foremost part in the work of reconstruction and reconquest. One was Kitchener; the other was Lord Cromer.

The positions of both men were anomalous and irregular, as was everything connected with the British occupation of Egypt; but the office of Lord Cromer afforded the greater paradox. Under the insignificant title of British Consul-General at Cairo, he ruled Egypt and its legal sovereign the Khedive. Nominally indeed he was no more than British Consul-General; and a dozen other consuls-general represented other European powers in Cairo. In reality he was the representative of the power that had intervened in Egypt, the power that had kept the Khedive on his throne, the power that still retained its troops in the country; and on that account his word was decisive. His advice might be disliked; it had to be followed. His prescriptions might be distasteful to the native palate; they had to be swallowed. And both advice and prescriptions were soon found to be to the advantage of Egypt—a fact which did not always render them more grateful to those who had been inclined to reject them.

The man fitted his post, in the proverbial phrase, as a glove fits the hand. Tactful and suave in his dealings, Lord

Cromer respected the theory of his advisory position as long as the Khedive's ministers respected the reality that they must accept his advice. But if they ignored the convention they soon learnt that the diplomat who had begun life as a soldier could enforce his strength as well as he could conceal it. Sometimes the native officials rebelled; more often they intrigued against him. They seldom did so twice; the pressure of the iron hand suddenly made itself uncomfortably felt beneath the velvet glove.

'The masterful hand of a Resident,' said Lord Dufferin in a famous phrase of a famous report on the condition of Egypt, 'could soon have bent everything to his will.' Lord Cromer was not given the high attributes which attach to the British Resident at the court of an Indian prince, but he possessed the masterful hand. And in time he bent most things to his will. But the convention of his advisory position was retained to the end of a quarter of a century's service. It was an anomaly that by the mere passage of time had almost ceased to be an anomaly and became a tradition.

More or less closely associated with Lord Cromer were the British officials in the Egyptian service. Nominally these were the servants of the Khedive, and liable to be dismissed at the Khedive's pleasure; often they were not even at the head of the service, but under the orders of native ministers. Such was the theory; in reality they wielded a power above that of any native minister or official. And with very few exceptions they were men of the same outstanding ability and integrity that had made the Indian Civil Service respected and trusted in Asia.

The Consul-General and the officials had no easy task before them. Three separate problems faced them; and the means at their disposal for the solution of those problems were limited.

The first problem that faced the British in Egypt was financial; the second industrial; the third political. They had first to redeem the country from practical bankruptcy. They had secondly to restore it to prosperity. They had thirdly to decide what form of government was most suitable to the people. On the first and second points they were completely successful; as regards the third no such definite success was obtained, nor was it in fact obtainable.

Three Problems in Egypt.

The financial question was in some respects the most urgent, and for many Europeans the most interesting and important. Egypt was heavily burdened at the outset of the British control. She had to pay an annual tribute of 750,000 Turkish pounds[1] to the Sultan. She had also to pay the interest on the enormous debts of Khedive Ismail. The former could be accomplished with ease; the latter almost broke the back of Egypt. Nor was the burden diminished by the fact that the numerous foreigners resident in Egypt were exempt from taxation.

1. Finance.

The interest payable had been reduced by agreement with the creditors of Egypt in July 1880. The revenues of the country were administered, and the interest was paid by a Caisse de la Dette which, on its first institution in 1876, consisted of a Frenchman, an Austrian, and an Italian. The next year an Englishman was added; and in 1885 representatives of Germany and Russia joined the Board, which in its final form thus consisted of six members. These representatives were mainly responsible for financial administration; but in consequence of their position they were naturally concerned rather with the foreign creditors of Egypt than with Egypt itself. It remained for the British, as the real protecting power over Egypt, to look at the problem from the Egyptian point of view.

The revenues could not be increased, for the people were already taxed to the utmost. But it was possible to tackle the question at the other end, and to reduce the expenditure;

---

[1] About £650,000.

and this was accomplished at the price of some of the unpopularity of which the British were accused. Nor was the reason for this unpopularity far to seek. Administrative economy will be advocated by many in theory; in practice it is universally unpopular. A spendthrift government is seldom condemned until too late; an economical government is always condemned too soon. And while to most people the state is as much an abstraction as the ocean, and its resources are supposed to be as boundless, one will hear much of individual hardships caused by retrenchment and little of the general advantages. Few things are more annoying to the possessor of a sinecure than to be deprived of his post; and since there were many sinecures in the Khedive's service, many officials found themselves suddenly bereft of position and salary. The outcry was loud, and it was sincere; and since retrenchment was the order of the day until all superfluous functionaries had been removed, the outcry was also continuous. Nor was it confined to those who were dismissed; for those who were retained were not only compelled to work harder, but were oppressed with the wholesome fear that they might in the end have to suffer the fate of their late colleagues.

For mere popularity, however, the English administrators in Egypt had a thorough-going contempt. The outcry was disregarded; and while the reductions did not make the administration less efficient, they made it a good deal purer. The taxes, moreover, were now collected regularly at stated intervals, instead of spasmodically as before, to the great advantage not only of the revenue but of the taxpayer as well.

2. Industrial Reconstruction.

But mere economy soon discovers its limits; and there were insistent demands for increased expenditure in certain directions which could not be so easily dismissed as the plaint of a retrenched official. These demands led naturally to the second problem that faced the British in Egypt, that of the industrial reconstruction of the country.

Egypt was naturally a wealthy country. But a series of accidental circumstances had reduced it to poverty, if not to actual bankruptcy. Those accidental circumstances, however, had now been removed or palliated, albeit their consequences were still acutely felt; the work of reconstruction could therefore be begun. To that work Lord Cromer and the British officials in the Khedive's service now applied themselves with diligence; and while their efforts were necessarily tentative and experimental at first, they soon became more comprehensive and thorough.

The Nile and Irrigation.

The regulation of the water supply was the most pressing question of the day. The whole wealth of a rainless country must depend on its rivers; the very existence of Egypt depended directly on the Nile, and indirectly on the irrigation canals which spread the waters of the Nile far beyond their natural limits. But during the last few years of trouble irrigation had been neglected. Land had consequently gone out of cultivation; and when land is suffered to lie uncultivated in Northern Africa the desert soon claims it for its own.[1] It was therefore of vital importance to Egypt to return with redoubled energy to the work of irrigation, to restore the land which had gone out of use, and, if possible, to enlarge the cultivable area. This could only be achieved by a scientific control and distribution of the water supply. In the existing condition of things much of the water from the Nile, the sole but all-sufficient fountain of Egyptian life, was allowed to run to waste with every annual inundation;[2] yet it was of the highest importance to utilise for the benefit of Egypt every ounce of the fertilising stream that flowed down to the tideless Mediterranean from the valleys of Nubia.

---

[1] There is good reason to believe that much of the land which the Romans occupied and cultivated in North Africa has relapsed into desert simply because it was left uncultivated during the troubles that succeeded the fall of the Empire.

[2] Before the barrages were strengthened and rebuilt it is calculated that seventy per cent. of the water of the Nile flowed out to sea unused, just at the time of year when it was most needed for the cotton crops.

To do this might cost much money, but it was money well spent, for it repaid itself with interest every year in increased production of the soil, and increased prosperity of the people. And so great was the importance of regulating the water supply that the Finance Department, over which an Englishman now presided, was always liberal and even generous in its attitude to the demands of the irrigation engineers. Other departments in that hard-pressed country might be starved during the years that bankruptcy was being fought and conquered. Every penny that was spent on reorganising the army was grudgingly given. Little could be spared as yet for education. But every effort was made to increase the amount placed at the disposal of the irrigation works.

Between 1882 and 1885 a million sterling was provided for irrigation, mainly through Lord Cromer's insistence on the point. And within a short time these efforts began to tell, aided as they were by a fertile soil and an industrious peasantry. Under the direction of five Anglo-Indian engineers the flow of the Nile was now regulated in a way that Egypt had never known even in the days of her greatest prosperity. The water supply became more even and regular. Waste lands were reclaimed ; the crops increased steadily, and the burden of the taxes weighed less heavily on the more prosperous agriculturists.

But this was only the beginning of the revolution wrought by engineering skill in Egypt. The great barrage, which had been constructed across the Nile by European builders in the better days of native rule, and which regulated the flow of the Nile across its delta, had fallen into decay. It was repaired ; and experience showed that there was no very great exaggeration in the prediction of Nubar Pasha, the prime minister of the Khedive, that when the barrage was repaired, the treasury would never be empty.

A network of canals was dug to carry the water to every part of the Nile valley;[1] and in Lower Egypt, where a large area of neglected land that lay below the level of the sea had lapsed into swamp and sodden water-logged country, a project was brought forward for draining the whole district, and the work was actually begun in 1908.

The Aswan Dam.

And higher up the Nile at Aswan an enormous dam was constructed which further regulated the flow of the river. This stupendous work, which was carried out by the British firm of Sir John Aird, was planned by Sir William Willcocks, the head of the Irrigation Department in Egypt.[2] As an engineering feat it was unprecedented; but it was as successful as it was daring. Constructed of granite throughout, the dam stretched across the Nile above the First Cataract in a continuous straight line for a length of 1966 metres. By its action the river was ponded up 75 feet, and a lake was formed in Nubia two hundred miles long. The outflow of water through the dam was regulated by 140 under sluices each of 2 metres by 7, and 40 upper sluices each of 2 metres by 3½. The dam was originally 37 metres high at its highest point; at the top was a roadway 4 metres wide. Its deepest foundation was 25 metres below the roadway. The dam formed a reservoir containing one milliard cubic metres of water.

When the river was in its summer flood, the whole of the sluices were opened, and the Nile discharged itself through them without parting with its fertilising silt; when the annual flood had passed, and the clear winter flow began, the sluices were closed and the reservoir filled, a task that took about a hundred days. After this was accomplished, the sluices were again partly opened, and the outflow from the reservoir was regulated according to the needs of Egypt.

---

[1] Canals had already been dug under Ismail and his predecessors; but they were often faulty in construction and plan, and the level of many had to be changed.

[2] The cost of the work was far beyond the resources of Egypt; and had it not been for Sir Ernest Cassel, who financed it throughout, the execution must have been delayed for some years, to the great loss of the country.

The first stone of the dam was laid on 12th February 1899; the work was completed in December 1902. A few years later it was enlarged, and the height of water in the reservoir considerably increased.[1]

The Aswan dam provided a perennial supply of water for Middle Egypt; another dam was built at Asiut to divert the water to the fields. The beneficial effect of assuring a permanent water supply in a country where the water supply is the chief problem of existence could hardly be exaggerated; and even before the Aswan dam was completed the good results of the Irrigation Department's work were too evident to be denied. The Anglo-Indian engineers had brought new life to Egypt; and with whatever feelings the natives regarded the political character of the British control, they were not ungrateful for the benefit it had conferred upon their industry.[2]

The Public Gratitude.

The irrigation officials, in fact, often received touching marks of the public confidence in their goodwill and capacity; and some of the less informed agriculturists among whom they moved would frequently endow them with qualities and powers which they did not possess. It was enough for the natives to know that the engineer was the great benefactor of the country to make his advice sought, and his counsel desired, on the most diverse topics; and it was quite useless to point out that a man who was an authority on irrigation was not necessarily an expert in the law of land tenure.

---

[1] The literature of Egyptian irrigation is extensive and highly technical. I may mention, among other authorities, the *Annual Reports* of the Department; Garstin's *Basin of the Upper Nile*; Willcocks' *Egyptian Irrigation and the Nile in* 1904, and the same author's *The Assouan Reservoir*, with plans and a full description; the *Text-Book of Egyptian Agriculture*; various articles in *Engineering* (London), and Colonel Scott-Moncrieff in the *Geographical Journal*, April 1910.

[2] Some critics attacked the British as barbarians because the construction of the Aswan dam destroyed the beautiful ancient temple at Philæ. The engineers may plead not guilty to the charge; for they offered to rebuild the temple stone by stone elsewhere.

In one case, indeed, so deep was the gratitude to an engineer who improvised a hasty dam across a canal, and thereby saved an entire district from a threatened drought by distributing its water over the soil, that special thanksgivings were offered at the chief mosque of the place, and the people insisted that their deliverer should be present at the ceremony. For the moment human gratitude triumphed over that inalienable law of the Kuran, which forbade the presence of the unbeliever at any of the solemn ceremonies of Islám.

The Corvée Suppressed.

Agriculture benefited enormously by the application of science to the soil; it profited almost as much from a social reform that was accomplished in these years. The Corvée, that system of semi-slavery which is open to such grave abuses that it has been hated in whatever country it has been tried, was abolished in Egypt. Henceforth, except in cases of national emergency, such as a plague of locusts or the bursting of its banks by the Nile, the administration paid for the labour it employed, and the peasantry were no longer liable to be called upon to do gratuitous but forced work for the State. The abolition cost the Government nearly £400,000 a year; but it relieved the agriculturists of a far greater burden.

Judicial Reform.

One reform leads naturally to another; but there was one department of Egyptian administration with which the British did not concern themselves for some years. Justice and the law were left in native hands, although it had long been seen that the native tribunals were incompetent at their work, and conflicting and arbitrary in their decisions. Abuses and corruption were frequently alleged and sometimes proved against the

Egyptian judges; and the appointment of European judges was tried as a remedy. By the end of 1889 three English and three Belgian jurists were members of the Egyptian Court of Appeal.

The remedy was satisfactory as far as it went; but it did not go nearly far enough. The whole system of native jurisprudence—if the word system can rightly be applied where the thing itself does not exist—needed revision and recasting. In 1890, therefore, an experienced Anglo-Indian judge was appointed to examine the working of the Egyptian courts, and to recommend such changes as seemed desirable. His report was drastic, as was indeed only to be expected, and it produced a crisis in the shape of one of those conflicts between the Khedive's prime minister and Lord Cromer which were among the commoner events in Egyptian politics at the time. The crisis ended in the appointment of a new prime minister and the carrying out of the judicial reforms.

Education.

Education fared less well; and it was often made a subject of reproach to the British, both by European and Egyptian critics, that they spent so little on the schools of Egypt. The sufficient answer to the charge was that no more money was available. While Egypt was still struggling with bankruptcy, while budgets had to be balanced by extraordinary expedients,[1] and different departments fought for the apportionment of every penny from the finance office, irrigation was naturally given the advantage over education. The same money could not be used twice for different purposes; and those who complained that education was forgotten would have raised a far louder outcry had the work of irrigation been neglected.

But with the return of prosperity a greater outlay was made on education. Special, technical, and normal schools were opened; the elementary schools were largely increased. And the government schools, which had been contemptible institutions, badly staffed, badly planned, and badly paid, gradually won a better reputation; but very much still remained to be done in this direction.

---

[1] One budget was balanced by the simple method of deferring the payment of official salaries which were due in December until the new year; another by a strict administration of the law of conscription, which produced large sums from those who were willing to pay the fine for exemption from service.—Milner, *England in Egypt*.

The Return of Prosperity.

That prosperity had returned there could be no doubt whatever. Taxation had been largely reduced, but, notwithstanding, there was an annual surplus on the budget. The State Savings Bank, which was founded in 1901, increased its deposits every year until in 1904 it had 29,152 customers whose balances totalled 183,326 pounds Egyptian. An Agricultural Bank was founded in the following year, which by 1905 had 185,530 loans outstanding, to the amount of over five millions sterling, all of which was being used in the development of the country. A Government Reserve Fund was instituted. Imports and exports both rose steadily; and the number of railway travellers, usually a fair index of a country's prosperity, increased year by year.

3. The Political Question.

Such were the more evident signs of the industrial revolution wrought by a quarter-century of British control in Egypt; but the prosperity of the country in itself led to the third question that faced the English administration. Financially, Egypt was no longer bankrupt. Industrially, she was flourishing. There was yet the political problem which, dwarfed at first by more pressing financial and industrial considerations, assumed prominence as finance and industry became more settled.

The British, as the dominant power in Egypt, had to decide what form of government was most suitable to this land of paradox, this land which was nominally subject to the declining Ottoman Empire, really subject to the growing British Empire; this land whose educated classes spoke French and studied in European universities while still remaining orientals at heart; this land whose capital of Cairo was at once the intellectual centre of Islám and a cosmopolitan centre of European influence.

Extent of the Constitutional Nationalist Movement.

For centuries the government of Egypt had been a pure despotism. Neither the Sultan nor the Khedive wished to change that system, which had at least the advantage of being simple and easily understood, and which had not in the past denied to Egypt many of the good things of life. But among the European influences that had filtered into the country during the latter part of the nineteenth century were some novel ideas concerning liberty, that attractive goddess for whose sake men are ready to die until they possess her, but, possessing her, are apt to forget her charms although still ready to deny her to other men of like desires at the point of the sword.

Travelled and educated Egyptians discovered that the people of Europe prided themselves on their liberty, their constitutions, their parliaments; and they naturally asked themselves why this happy system, which proved so satisfactory in one continent, should not prove equally satisfactory in another.

They were freely encouraged in their belief. The casual European traveller and the trained European politician discussed the possibility of constitutional and parliamentary government in Egypt; and it was often assumed by those who admired the institutions of England, that if only those institutions could be transplanted to the banks of the Nile the country would automatically be relieved of its most pressing distresses. It was apparently forgotten that the institutions of England were the outcome of an utterly different intellectual soil and political atmosphere, although Lord Cromer pointed to the fact with incisive force. ‘Can any sane man believe,’ he said, ‘that a country which has for centuries past been exposed to the worst forms of misgovernment at the hands of its rulers, from Pharaohs to Pashas, and in which, in 1897, only 9.5 per cent. of the men could read and write, is capable of suddenly springing into a position which will enable it to exercise full rights of autonomy with advantage to itself and others ? '[1]

Nevertheless an agitation was carried on in favour of parliamentary government in Egypt ; and although Lord Cromer in his farewell speech[2] on resigning his post in 1907, again condemned it as a ' wholly spurious manufactured movement,' it met with some support. The agitation, as the British Consul-General pointed out, did not really represent the intelligent opinion of Egypt ; the leaders of the movement disagreed violently among themselves on almost every item of their programme, or rather programmes ; and their followers, if active, were neither very numerous nor very influential.

Yet notwithstanding, or perhaps because of, these defects they made rather large claims for themselves. After the manner of the Arábists of 1882, they took the title of Nationalists, as a sign probably of their intention to create an Egyptian nation—for none had existed since the days of the Pharaohs—they held congresses, they founded newspapers, and they endeavoured to influence opinion both in their own country and in Europe.

It cannot be said that they were very successful. Europe remained mildly incredulous of the capacity of Egypt to govern itself by means of an autonomous parliament ; it remembered that Egypt had been a subject country for centuries, and that it had been rescued from bankruptcy by a foreign nation within living memory. In the early days of the British occupation France might indeed have seen in the Nationalist movement a means of annoying England, and have encouraged it on that ground ; but since the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 the Republic had withdrawn its objection to the presence of England in Egypt, and it gave an unequivocal sign of its lack of faith in the Nationalist cause by prohibiting the holding of a Congress of the Young Egypt party on French soil in 1909.

---

[1] Report, London *Times*, 5th April 1907.

[2] London *Times*, 6th May 1907.

In England, however, the Egyptian Nationalists found for some time more support. The generous sympathy of British Liberalism was given freely, and without much critical inquiry, to a movement which invoked the sacred names of liberty, parliamentary government, and constitutional rule, as that sympathy had also been given in equal measure to constitutional-nationalist movements in Italy, Poland, and elsewhere. Members of Parliament interested themselves in supporting the Egyptian Nationalist movement, corresponded with its leaders, made speeches in their favour, and welcomed them on their occasional visits to England. And Sir Eldon Gorst, the British Consul-General, who succeeded Lord Cromer in 1907, was understood to be more sympathetic to the Nationalists than his predecessor, and to have the approval of the Liberal Government in England in his conciliatory policy.

Its Real Character.

But gradually these feelings of sympathy and support became less pronounced as the inner meaning of Egyptian Nationalism was better understood. The Nationalists might profess a wish for the constitution of England in order to gain support for their party in England; but in reality they were bitterly opposed to England and to English control.[1] Their main object was admittedly the evacuation of Egypt by England.[2] They put that aim in the forefront of their programme, and other items were of very minor importance in comparison with evacuation. The very word nationalism was in itself deceptive; for Egyptian-Nationalism was essentially a politico-religious, rather than a national or constitutional movement, and the question of a constitution played a far smaller part in the agitation at Cairo than was understood in England at the time.

---

[1] One exception may be noted. The Egyptian Liberal Party, while advocating constitutional government, expressly dissociated itself from the anti-British campaign, and announced its wish to be on friendly terms with the British authorities. See the programme drawn up by Mohamed Wahid at Helwan, 26th July 1907, and subsequently published in the London *Times*.

[2] Mohamed Farid Bey, a Nationalist leader who visited England in 1908, admitted this openly even in England. His outspokenness caused

Nationalism anti-European and anti-Christian.

Egyptian Nationalism, so-called, was, in fact, if not by open admission, a part of the general opposition of Islám in Africa to the advance of Christian European rule. It was both anti-European and anti-Christian; its followers were ardent adherents of the new Pan-Islámic doctrine, which looked for a political reunion of all the Mohammedan states against the great European and Christian nations whose advance in Asia and Africa threatened the political, if not the religious power, of Islám.[1] The adherents of the Egyptian Nationalists were nearly all Mohammedans; the native Christians of Egypt, the Copts, had hardly any connection with the movement. When a Copt was appointed prime minister of the Khedive the Nationalists protested; when that unfortunate statesman, Boutros Pasha, was murdered by a young Mohammedan in 1910, the Nationalists extenuated the crime, worked for the murderer's acquittal, and failing in that, made a hero and a martyr of him after his execution.

That episode, which did much to discredit the Nationalist party in the eyes of the world, showed the anti-Christian character of the movement; and no doubt whatever existed as to its anti-European tendencies. Above and beyond all, the Egyptian Nationalist movement was anti-British because it was essentially anti-European, and Britain represented Europe in Egypt. It was temporarily pro-French because

---

no small embarrassment to those who had intended to support him. (*Manchester Guardian*, 22nd May 1908; *Glasgow Herald*, 1st June 1908.)

[1] See ch. i. for some account of the Pan-Islámic movement.

it was permanently anti-British, but the Francophile aspect of the movement vanished when France refused her support.

Its Grotesque Misrepresentations.

It was the inevitable policy of the Nationalist party to endeavour to deny the benefits that England had brought to Egypt. The Nationalist Press was full of the grossest lies against the British control;[1] it accused the British of ruining the land, which the British alone had benefited; it declared that they had enslaved the people, which had never known what freedom was under any of its previous rulers; it slandered every European from Lord Cromer downwards, and it did not even spare Eldon Gorst, whose early sympathy with a party whose aims he had misunderstood gradually evaporated under these attacks.[2]

These excesses and the murder of Boutros Pasha finally alienated the sympathy which Europe might have had for the Nationalist movement, had it followed constitutional lines. It was generally admitted that a more masterful hand was needed in control; and when Eldon Gorst died prematurely in 1911, Lord Kitchener was appointed his successor.

Its Foundations.

If it be asked by what means Egyptian Nationalism gained its influence, the answer is simple. The majority of the people were ignorant, and they believed what they were told. The British, occupied with the work of reform and administration, unwisely held somewhat aloof from those whom they ruled, expecting their work to speak for itself. It did; but the Nationalists took care that the credit should not be given to the authors. In spite of improved government, lower taxes, and increasing prosperity, the people were told that the British had ruined them, and that the British were infidels, who denied the true faith of Islám. The British did not trouble to deny the former, as they could not deny the latter charge; the Nationalists affirmed them both, and the people believed.

---

[1] The following extract, published in 1909 by *El Lewa*, a Nationalist journal, may serve as an example: 'Thou (the foreign ruler of Egypt) provest each day, by undeniable proofs, that thou hast but one end, that of blasting us; but one determination, that of destroying us; but one effort, that of ruining the beautiful country which is ours.' Other specimens of this pernicious rubbish are quoted in *The Truth about Egypt*, by J. Alexander.

[2] Gorst's *Report* for 1911.

History is full of examples to prove that it is not necessarily the truth of an accusation, but the fact that it is generally believed, that decides events. What is generally believed need not be true; and in spite of the glorious axiom that the truth is great and will prevail, the practical politician knows that a lie has as good a chance if it gets an equal start. The Nationalists appear to have realised this more quickly than the British; nor were they without another advantage in their campaign.

A once powerful school of political philosophy held that while men who were starving would certainly be ready for rebellion, the converse was equally true, and that men who were prosperous would also be contented. Experience has disproved the attractive theory. Prosperity brings new desires, new ambitions, new questions to the fore; success may even tend to excite discontent. For mere material prosperity is not everything in human life; it leaves untouched large spheres of politics, and almost the whole sphere of religion; and from these may spring the seed of revolutions, as much more difficult to deal with than those caused by physical suffering as the diseases of the mind are more complex than the diseases of the body.

It was this fact that the British had now to reckon with. They had confined themselves to the creation of material prosperity, and they had done wonders in that field. Politics and religion they had left to others, and the anti-British party had seized on those aspects of life, distorting all for their own benefit. The British had treated the body with sound medicines, while the anti-British had excited the soul with vain thoughts. The result was trouble and disappointment at the ingratitude of a people for whom much had been done; but there was still hope that the magnificent optimism of Lord Cromer would in time be justified, who remarked, as he left the country in whose service almost the whole of his official life had been spent, 'I believe it to be a fact that the children of the blind are able to see.'

In this conflict between body and soul, between Western and Eastern ideas, between material prosperity and politico-religious unrest, the first period of the English connection with Egypt drew to a close.

Britain had entered Egypt by chance; she remained by accident; she reformed by instinct. But in the end she decided, not without thought of the central position of Egypt on the world's chief highway, not to evacuate the country which she had refused when it was offered her, and had occupied when it was begrudged her. She had added one more paradox to the history of a land of eternal paradox; for this country which Britain ruled was still the province of another empire.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEDICAL REVOLUTION: 1900-10[1]

Similarity of European Colonies in the Tropics.

In the history of the West Indies and West Africa are to be found most of the failures and many of the successes of the British in the most difficult of all their tropical dependencies. They do not differ in essentials from the records of other European nations with similar dependencies; the same general type of administration and the same social structure have taken root in the French and German tropical colonies as in the British; the same general objects have been pursued by the officials, planters, and traders who form the white population and the ruling class in every dependency. Climate and the products of the soil have more to do with the differences between one tropical colony and another than any apparent variation between British, French, and German colonial policy.

---

[1] The best works on this important subject are Ross's *The Prevention of Malaria*; Boyce's *Mosquito or Man*, *Health Progress and Administration in the West Indies*, and *Yellow Fever and its Prevention*. The ample publications of the Liverpool and London Schools of Tropical Medicine

Their Commercial Value and Disadvantages.

In practically every case the tropical dependencies of Europe have been valued and retained for their products and trade. They were colonies whose resources were to be exploited, not colonies whose vacant spaces were to be peopled. Indeed they were generally peopled already, often by races of an obviously inferior type to the European, but races which, nevertheless, had this important and in fact fundamental advantage over the European, that they were acclimatised and could propagate their kind in the tropics, whereas the European was not acclimatised, could not, or at least did not, propagate his kind in any number, and often died of diseases from which large numbers of the natives were immune. On the other hand the aborigines were in most cases as inferior to the European in mental development as they were superior to him in physical resisting power. That and the fertility of the soil decided the industrial and social condition of every tropical dependency.

Their Social Organisation.

Despite his physical disadvantages, the superior mental equipment and business capacity of the white man gave him a permanent and enormous advantage over the aborigines in the tropics. He was necessarily the master, and the native the servant or slave, who could work, or be compelled to work, for the European

---

should be consulted; Augustin's *History of Yellow Fever*; and Gasquet's *The Black Death*. But the literature of tropical medicine is growing too rapidly to be summarised in a limited space, and Boyce's publications mentioned above contain a good bibliography.

invader. There was no need for the white master to import white labourers; the native was cheap, and he was plentiful; man for man he was a better labourer than the white, whose constitution was less fitted for strenuous work in the tropics. Thus there was at once created a simple social fabric of white aristocracy and black servitors, which was modified but not abolished by the abolition of slavery.

European colonies in the tropics were often at first nothing more than trading-stations. They developed into plantations, and the size and number of those plantations increased as the demand for tropical produce and raw materials increased in Europe. Roads and railways were built to accommodate the growing traffic; markets were formed, and towns were founded for the exchange of imports and exports.

Their Administration.

A regular administrative system was evolved, which, in the British settlements, consisted generally of a governor and council, sometimes of a governor and legislative assembly. On this council or assembly, which before the emancipation of the slaves was composed solely of the white proprietors and planters, some modifications were subsequently introduced. The natives or the emancipated slaves were sometimes given the right of representation; but this system, which was not altogether successful, was again modified in some colonies in the later nineteenth century, and more bureaucratic methods substituted for the popular element. And since the administrative officials were generally upright and able men, drawn from some of the best classes in Britain, this change usually proved a distinct improvement.

But the political constitutions of the tropic settlements were of tertiary importance. The primary consideration of every colony was its trade; the secondary consideration was its health. On these two considerations depended its continued existence.

The tropical trade was profitable, but it was precarious.

Their Trade Profitable but Precarious.

A planter might amass a respectable fortune in a few years; he might lose all his capital in a few months. A blight, a parasite, an inundation, or a bad season, might destroy thousands of acres of cultivated crops; but whereas the two latter evils were transient in their effects, the two former often wrought permanent ruin. The only escape from the evil effects of a blight or a parasite was to introduce a different crop.[1]

Another danger that menaced the planter was over-production. If sugar or coffee, cotton or rubber, proved very profitable, every planter from Ceylon to British Guiana began to grow those crops; and within a few years the price on the European markets would fall until no profit was left.[2] Recurrent crises of this kind marked the economic development of the tropics; but with scattered plantations and independent planters there was no means of preventing them.

A more serious danger, because a more permanent loss, lay in the progress of science. A grave blow was struck at a leading tropical industry when it was discovered that sugar could be made from the beet, which could be grown in a temperate zone, as well as from the cane, which could only flourish in the tropics. Thousands of pounds of yearly income, and millions of pounds of capital, were lost from this cause alone; a smaller blow was struck when indigo was made chemically, and other colours were produced from coal-tar. Had a substitute for rubber and cotton been discovered, a very considerable part of the prosperity of the tropics would have collapsed.

But what science took away, or threatened to take away, with the one hand, it more than gave back with the other. It withdrew some of the products of the tropics from the field of profitable commercial enterprise; but at the same time it made the tropics inhabitable and healthy for the white man. It ruined the trade of a few hundred planters; but it saved the lives of many thousands.

---

[1] See for example, the case of coffee in Ceylon, mentioned in bk. xv.

[2] The best known case of this kind occurred in Brazil, where the over-production of coffee led to government intervention in the State of San Paulo.

The Unhealthiness of the Tropics.

The unhealthiness of the tropics had always been the greatest drawback to their exploitation by European enterprise. The white planter might amass a fortune in Jamaica or Guiana; but he did so at the imminent and daily risk of his life. The successful owner of a prosperous estate was never free from the spectre of a sudden attack by a mysterious and deadly disease; a disease from which he might indeed recover, possibly at the cost of a ruined constitution, but to which it was equally likely that he would succumb within a few hours. He might affect to laugh at the danger, he might frankly admit it and dread it, but whether he admitted it or laughed at it, the danger was there.

Social Consequences.

In the long run the death-rate is the ultimate determining factor of almost every problem in almost every community. If the ordinary span of human life were either double or half its present normal duration of seventy years, if most men lived to a hundred and fifty, or died at forty, the whole fabric of European civilisation would be sensibly modified. The laws of succession and inheritance would require revision, the rates of insurance and interest on capital would be revolutionised, wages and salaries would be changed, the incidence of taxation would be altered, and the whole conception of existence would be seen from a different angle.

In the same way the European who settled in the tropics found his whole outlook was immediately altered, and most of the peculiar features in the social and industrial conditions of the tropic colonies owe their existence to the high death-rate among the white settlers there. The European's life was far more precarious there than in the temperate zone; and therefore his profits had to be greater, and they had to be made more quickly than in Europe. If his life was not cut short prematurely, as it often was, by disease, he retired from active work earlier than in Europe, and from early middle age he generally resided in the land of his birth, probably paying occasional visits to his property in the tropics, which was left in charge of a manager or overseer of his own race. Hardly ever did the white man make his permanent home in the tropics, since he could not rear his children there; and his children, born in the temperate zone, with an inheritance of property in the tropics, usually retired from active management of their plantations earlier in life than their father, the original pioneer. Sometimes they even contented themselves with flying visits every three or four years to their estates. If those estates were capably managed, the tendency for the owner to give up the personal direction of his plantation increased; and by the third generation a system of absentee proprietorship had come into existence, which often led to hardships and abuses among the slaves or employees.

The white man had never lived in the tropics before the beginning of the sixteenth century,[1] and therefore he was especially liable to the diseases of the tropics, since he had not acquired immunity from repeated attacks of those diseases. And the fact that his children were usually born, and nearly always reared, not in the tropics but in the temperate zone, prevented the next and every succeeding generation of European settlers in the tropics from acquiring immunity from the diseases peculiar to the tropics.

The aboriginal natives of the tropics, it is true, died by thousands of the diseases which the white man brought with him;[1] but they were many, while the whites were relatively few; and the white man in the tropics died equally rapidly from mysterious maladies which his physicians could not even name.

---

[1] At least in modern times. There were white settlements in tropical or semi-tropical lands in ancient history, which were not, however, permanent in character. Some writers hold the opinion that these settlements were brought to a disastrous end by the gradual spread of disease or by sudden epidemics with which the rudimentary medical science of the day was unable to cope. The theory seems reasonable and probable; but I have not enough knowledge to decide whether it is true. Nor am I certain that sufficient materials exist for a final judgment to be formed on the point.

Yellow Fever.

At the very outset of the European invasion of the tropics these diseases were encountered. The first European settlement that was planted in America, the city of Isabella in the West Indies, was founded in the year 1493; and in that same year some of its pioneer inhabitants were stricken down with the fatal scourge that was soon to acquire so evil a reputation under the name of yellow fever or Yellow Jack. And every new settlement that was founded suffered the same experience, in Central America, in the West Indies, and in West Africa; almost every newcomer to every colony caught the disease.

Some colonies were worse than others; none were free. Some individuals suffered more than others, and died more rapidly; none were immune. Disease was constantly present, levying a regular toll on the community. Sometimes its ravages appeared to be checked for a few years, but it would then break out with more severity than ever; the arrival of a newcomer was almost certain to be the signal for an attack or an epidemic.[2]

The Appalling Mortality.

Often these attacks were local and limited, so limited even that the disease was hardly remarked upon except by those whose profession it was to fight it; but sometimes it rose in its might and slew by the thousand. At such times the black angel of death would sweep whole settlements bare, and ruin the work of a century in a few days of sudden agony.

---

[1] Tuberculosis, measles, smallpox, and syphilis proved the most fatal European diseases; especially in the islands of the Pacific Ocean thousands of people died of the scourges which the white man brought with him. See vol. v. bks. xx. and xxi.

[2] Yellow fever sometimes spread even beyond the tropics, and occasional cases were discovered in seaports of the temperate zone. But it never obtained a firm foothold beyond Capricorn and Cancer; and happily it was not prevalent in every part of the tropics. In India, for instance, it was unknown.

Many of the greatest ravages of the scourge were so appalling that by their very magnitude they have forced their way into histories that scarcely concern themselves with the public health. In the British expedition of 1741 against Carthagena, for instance, no fewer than 8431 men lost their lives by fever out of an army of 12,000. That campaign was absolutely ruined by the outbreak; and twenty years later in the siege of Havana, a city whose extraordinary beauty could not hide its extraordinary unhealthiness, a similar outbreak occurred. On that occasion 3000 sailors and 5000 soldiers were on the sick list within a month of their arrival in the West Indies. Again, during the British campaign against Hayti in 1795, nearly 13,000 out of 18,000 troops perished in little over a year; some of the regiments were absolutely wiped out of existence. A few years later, when Napoleon endeavoured to reduce that rebel colony of France, 26,000 of the best Gallic troops perished within a twelvemonth. It was yellow fever, far more than the exertions of the negro leaders, that secured the independence of the negro republics of the island.

On occasion the mortality of the white troops in the West Indies rose to the fearful figure of sixty-nine per cent. per annum; and so widespread was the evil reputation of Demerara, a city where yellow fever was more than usually severe, that seamen often refused to engage on vessels if they knew that their destination was to be British Guiana. On the other hand, it was noticed that the mortality from yellow fever of the black troops in the West Indies was not more than one per cent.

The medical science of the day was absolutely and completely baffled by these terrible outbreaks. Black vomiting, a high temperature, sudden collapse, and speedy death, were the more regular marks of the disease. But the symptoms were frequently difficult to diagnose; the doctors could in any case do little to cure their patients of a malady which they could not understand, and from which they themselves often perished.

In their ignorance, and in the public panic, the epidemics were ascribed to all manner of imagined and contradictory causes. The exudations from the soil, the miasmata, were the most popular explanation of yellow fever; but the air, the sea, and even the stars and planets were all blamed in turn. The Gulf Stream was suspected by one school of thought in the West Indies, which forgot that yellow fever was equally prevalent in West Africa, where the Gulf Stream did not flow. Ships were accused of bringing the infection from other countries, trading vessels were sometimes scuttled, and cargoes, even when these were granite setts and gravel, were destroyed in a bad epidemic for fear of further infection. The slaving ships of the older days were often dreaded as much for the disease which they were believed to bring as they were valued for their cargoes of slaves; but when the slave trade was prohibited in 1807 the disease still continued its ravages. Philanthropy and the New Humanity were alike powerless before Yellow Jack.

Mistaken Ideas as to its Origin.

The graveyards, too, were always objects of suspicion, and the dead, who in this case were innocent, were believed to infect the living; but none suspected the real cause of the malady, the variety of mosquito which is known to science as Stegomyia.

But death had other powerful allies in this fight against man, whose attacks were not less potent for evil than the unknown agent of yellow fever. Malaria, one of the most widespread of all diseases, whose ravages were known to ancient Greece and Rome, and to mediæval Italy and Spain, had long been familiar to every visitor to tropical and sub-tropical regions. Among the five million persons of all races who died annually of fever

Other Diseases: Malaria, etc.

in India alone, the greater number died of malaria or its complications.[1] The dreaded blackwater fever, an aggravated form of malaria, was less generally prevalent, but far more fatal where it once gained a hold.[2] Cholera was a regular visitor in many parts; and sleeping sickness came near to depopulating whole provinces in Africa, while it was not unknown in the West Indies, whither it was transported by the slaves who were suffering from the disease.

For four centuries European civilisation in the tropics had recoiled before these fearful plagues, with a long record of death and defeat inflicted by an invisible army whose ravages far outstripped the puny efforts of the most potent human conquerors. So it had always been; so it seemed likely that it always would be. The whole thing moved in a vicious circle. The white man did not propagate his kind in the tropics, and accordingly he never acquired immunity for his children. Every newcomer was therefore liable to be attacked, and very generally was attacked, by yellow fever or malaria.

And men had long since become accustomed to the risks of life in the tropics. They accepted the chance of fever as an inevitable condition of their calling, as the man who cultivates a farm on a volcano accepts the chance of an eruption, or a miner accepts the chance of an explosion; and although long-established diseases were being fought and vanquished in Europe, the residents in the tropics were incredulous of any improvement in their own sphere.

The Pasteur School of Bacteriology.

Nothing indeed was definitely known as to the origin of these diseases; nothing more was known as to their treatment than that they sometimes yielded to quinine, and that they never yielded to anything else. There was no indication of any possible improvement in the conditions of tropical life until the magnificent work of Louis Pasteur in Paris established the new medical sciences of bacteriology and epidemiology on a sound footing towards the close of the nineteenth century. But the splendid successes of the school founded by Pasteur and his disciples, which revolutionised much of the accepted theory and practice of medicine, went far towards liberating the temperate zones of the earth from some of their most prevalent diseases ;[1] and inspired by the example, others turned their attention to the tropics, and studied the scourges that had defied the older physicians in the light of recent discoveries. They encountered, as their master Pasteur had encountered, some ignorant opposition, a good deal of passive resistance, and not a little of the fatalistic superstition that holds it useless and even impious to seek a remedy for the evils which an enlightened but angry Deity is supposed to have inflicted upon His people. But the new school disregarded both the outworn theological dogma and the conservative instincts of mankind ; and the innovators were fortunate enough to find support in an unexpected quarter that far outweighed all opposition.

---

[1] Malaria encircled the whole tropical belt from Panama to Java. One of the few places where it was not found was Barbados, where the fish destroyed the insects that spread the infection.

[2] Blackwater fever was particularly prevalent in the island of Tobago.

The British Schools of Tropical Medicine, 1898.

The most thoroughgoing apologist of the British Colonial Office could hardly claim that it had ever shown itself in advance of the times during the many years that it had played the part of the fly upon the wheel of the British Empire. But for almost the first time since its creation, the Colonial Office happened to be in charge of a statesman of the first rank in the last years of the Victorian age ; and Joseph Chamberlain's prompt recognition of the work of the investigators into tropical diseases counts as by no means the least of his many services to his countrymen.[2]

---

[1] Among the earlier successes of the bacteriologists were the discovery of the bacilli of anthrax, tuberculosis, typhoid, and cholera.

[2] The political opponents of Chamberlain, who did not hesitate to charge him with causing the South African War, and therefore with responsibility for the deaths of thousands of British soldiers, forgot to credit him

Mainly through his exertions, two schools of tropical medicine were founded in London and Liverpool, the two British ports most closely connected with tropical produce and shipping, in the year 1898. Remedial and preventive measures were now discussed, and comparative investigations were instituted into the causes and nature of tropical diseases; the work was carried on in conjunction with other nations which also possessed tropical colonies; and two discoveries of fundamental importance that were made at this time foreshadowed the new era of health that soon dawned upon the tropics.

The Origin of Malaria discovered, 1897.

So far back as the year 1880 Laveran, a French scientist in Algiers, had demonstrated that the blood of persons suffering from malaria was swarming with minute parasites; but it was not known whence those parasites came, nor by what agency they were introduced into the blood. But in the year 1897 Major Ronald Ross discovered, after a series of searching investigations in India, that malaria was propagated, not as the ancients had supposed, by the bad air from the marshes—the *mal aria* from which the disease was named—but by the Anopheline mosquito that breeds in the marshes and introduces the parasite which Laveran had discovered into the blood. The Anopheline could not exist without its breeding-grounds, which were often situated in the most fertile and pleasant districts of the tropics; if the area of marshland therefore was reduced the ravages of malaria would be reduced in proportion; while if the marshes were drained out of existence it became certain that the Anophelines and malaria would die out together.

Hardly was the enormous value of this discovery realised when an equally important investigation was triumphantly concluded in the West Indies. Havana had long been a

with a large share in saving the lives of thousands of white men in the tropics.

hotbed of yellow fever; and the transfer of Cuba from Spain to the United States at the close of the war of 1898 led to an immediate enquiry by American scientific men into the origin of the disease which devastated the capital of that island. Research again proved the mosquito at fault. At the close of the year 1900 it was ascertained beyond doubt that yellow fever was spread by the Stegomyia variety of mosquito, which had its breeding-grounds in stagnant water; and the prompt measures that were taken to drain the city were at once rewarded with success. Irrefragable proof, indeed, was furnished of the truth of the discovery; for within a few months Havana, which had never been free from yellow fever since its foundation, showed a clean bill of health.[1]

The Origin of Yellow Fever Discovered, 1900.

The introduction of efficient drainage and sanitation, a conduit water supply with water pipes communicating from the source to every house, and the abolition of the old haphazard and careless methods of collecting and storing water, were the simple secrets of the new tropical hygiene. They were forthwith put into practice in every tropical colony where a progressive administration prevailed. And commissions were now sent out from England by the schools of tropical medicine, to urge the new hygiene on every tropical British colony; stern battles were fought against the plagues of mosquitoes in Hongkong, in Malaya, in West Africa, and the West Indies; and the success of the fight was everywhere directly in proportion to the zeal of the combatants against disease. Where the possible sources of infection were overlooked, malaria or yellow fever broke out from time to time; where the authorities were lukewarm and the people careless the old

The New Tropical Hygiene.

---

[1] Had it not been for this discovery, the cutting of the Panama Canal, which had been delayed by continual outbreaks of yellow fever, could never have been completed.

pests still found a hospitable home; but wherever the new hygiene was enforced the old diseases were banished.

Vigorous campaigns were now conducted in many colonies—campaigns against old water-tubs, water-butts, broken and disused crockery, old bottles and calabashes that had been thrown away, and any other receptacle for the stagnant water that served as a breeding-ground for the mosquito. Fire engines were employed to steam the mosquitoes out of houses where they swarmed, disinfectants and larva destructors were regularly used, and the bushes and weeds which harboured the pests were destroyed.

Lectures were delivered in various places to awaken public opinion on the subject, handbills and pamphlets were widely distributed to give information and advice; by-laws were passed for the destruction of mosquitoes, and prosecutions were instituted against those who neglected to obey.

A large part of the tropics was thus brought within measurable reach of abolishing two of the greatest scourges of human life; but very much yet remained to be done. Nor was the advance without some obstacles. Short-sighted white traders occasionally opposed the notification of an outbreak of disease by the medical authorities, on the ground that the admission that disease existed in the colony was prejudicial to its commercial interests. Yet by so doing they risked an epidemic, which would have entailed a far more serious loss to the community than the notification of a case or two of yellow fever. This reactionary feeling, which found frequent expression in the colonial newspapers, had to be surmounted; and the attempt had to be made at the same time to give the aborigines some elementary ideas of hygiene and sanitation.

Among most of the native races in the tropics the conditions of housing, food and clothing were bad.[1] The absence of clothing was harmful in the rainy season; the diet was often unsuitable, inadequate, and irregular; and the low moral condition of many of the tribes reacted prejudicially on their physique, particularly in regard to the early marriages which were in vogue. The exuberant fertility of the savage races was fully nullified by the diseases which cut them down, and their unhealthiness necessarily reacted on the European settlements.

---

[1] See Dr. Ziemann in *Beihefte zum Archiv für Schiffs- und Tropen-Hygiene*, December 1907; and comments of the *British Medical Journal*, 16th May 1908.

The Revolutionary Consequences.

But a serious endeavour was now made to improve their condition; and although the work of improvement over so vast a field could not but be slow and gradual, it gave every sign of being permanent. The European invader was stronger than the natives of the tropics; and he now pressed his advantage over them for good, as he had formerly pressed it for evil. And during the first decade of the twentieth century enough had already been seen of the new tropical hygiene and the new methods of preventive medicine to demonstrate that they had revolutionised the position of the white man in the tropics; and that in consequence they had revolutionised the whole future development of the tropics.

The new tropical hygiene assured the permanence of European settlements in tropic lands, and seemed to make it certain that the white man could now reproduce his kind in the tropics without any serious loss of mental or physical strength in himself or his descendants.[1] He could not indeed oust the original inhabitants of the lands he conquered; nor would he often condescend to mix his blood with theirs. But he could now acclimatise his race; he could establish his creed, his culture, and his civilisation on a footing as solid, as stable, and as permanent as it possessed in the temperate zone.

---

[1] How nearly Europeans can become acclimatised in the tropics can only be determined by the experience of generations. The most optimistic view is that of Colonel Gorgas, of the United States Army, who stated in *Sanitation in the* [Panama] *Canal Zone* that the elimination of malaria and yellow fever made 'life in the tropics more healthful for the Anglo-Saxon than in the temperate zones; that gradually tropical countries, which offer a much greater return for man's labour than do the temperate zones, will be settled up by the white races, and that again the centres of wealth, civilisation, and population will be in the Tropics.' Vaughan Cornish states that white children born in the tropics under the new conditions do not show unusual delicacy, and that the mothers make a normal, although sometimes slow, recovery from confinement. But experience is still too recent and limited to allow this question to be

His creed was Christianity, now for the second time planted in Africa, and ready once more to fight the united forces of Islám and the scattered forces of paganism in a new crusade for human souls.

The standard of culture varies with every individual; but the art, the literature, and the music of Europe were available to those who desired them.

The Advance of Civilisation.

The conditions and aims of civilisation are more difficult to define; the spiritual ideals of the civilised state will vary with every age and every people; but on its material side civilisation stands always and inevitably for order against chaos, for stability against impermanence, chance, or whim; for settled government and security against revolution. The velvet glove of custom and law will, in a civilised state, cover and to some extent conceal the essential basis of physical force and ethical doctrine on which the whole fabric of government must ultimately rest; and the order which civilisation requires from man in the State it will demand, so far as it can, from Nature. It will drain swamps, check floods, promote irrigation; it will make good roads, construct railways and improve the means of communication; it will insist on hygienic and sanitary towns, and enforce a certain minimum of education; it will encourage industry, since civilisation, which is essentially the making of order, can only be maintained by a continual war against invading disorders and tendencies to return to chaos.

---

decided; and in any case the influence of the climate will probably cause some pronounced change in the normal characteristics of Europeans located for generations in the tropics.

For this making of order, then, European civilisation stood in Africa and elsewhere in the tropics; and although much of the work was still no more than a shadowy hope of the future, something had been achieved even under the old conditions before the coming of the new hygiene.

Slavery had vanished almost everywhere in the countries dominated by European rule;[1] only in districts imperfectly subdued did the ancient degradation of Africa survive. Cannibalism and the orgies of human sacrifice were being everywhere suppressed. The cultivation of the soil, the development of the rich resources of nature, and the advancement of the aborigines[2] were sought by the white planters, governors, and missionaries, who were now becoming the real controllers and civilisers of Africa.

The Promise of Permanence.

These things, which were begun in the nineteenth century under the old bad conditions surrounding European expansion in the tropics, justified the European conquest of Africa, as the victory of civilisation over barbarism is everywhere justified by its results: but under those conditions, of insanitary settlements and sudden terrible epidemics, there was no promise of permanence in the conquest of European civilisation. The deadly toll of tropical disease had changed the polity of the Anglican Church in West Africa;[3] it had hampered the advance of European civil administration on all sides; and it might conceivably have wiped out European rule altogether in Africa, as it had been the chief factor in destroying European rule in Hayti. And in that event there can be no doubt that the horrible practices of barbarism, massacre, torture, and slavery, would have revived; for in Africa civilisation has always come from without, while barbarism has been bred from within.

---

[1] Practically everywhere except in Congola and Angola.

[2] The widespread native liquor traffic was the worst blot on the European conquest of Africa. Efforts were made to suppress it; but prohibition would have led to smuggling; and high import duties, such as were levied in Nigeria, made little difference to the amount consumed.

[3] See ch. i. of this bk.

But the new medicine and the new tropical hygiene rendered such a catastrophe impossible. Not only had they saved thousands of lives and improved the conditions for those they had saved ; they had brought the promise of permanence to the European civilisation which now began to spread over Africa. And in that respect the discovery of remedies for malaria and yellow fever deserves to rank among the most potent auxiliaries of human progress that the world has seen.

Book XV

THE ASIATIC TROPICS: 1579-1910

CHAPTER I

THE DOMINANCE OF EUROPE

The wealth of the Orient was the magnet which drew occidental Europe to the discovery of the outer world. The exploration of America was but an incident in the search for the Indies; each bay that was entered, every river whose course was followed patiently from mouth to source or from source to mouth, raised fresh hope that at last a passage to the East was found. And the European settlement of America sprang naturally from the European search for Asia; the 'call of the West' was in its earlier stages but the call of the further East. Our knowledge of the frozen Arctic is likewise derived from our desire to possess the tropics; it was not to observe the eternal blasts of winter that Frobisher sailed into the North-West Passage, that Willoughby risked and lost his life in the North-East; both navigators adventured the perils of an ice-wracked voyage that they might enjoy the sunny breath of India.

The victories of two centuries gave India to Britain; and that stupendous conquest carried with it, as a comet draws other bodies in its fiery train across the heavens, dominion elsewhere in other quarters of the globe. But other European nations likewise coveted and obtained territory in Asia. If the possessions of France in India were reduced to a minor seaport, that country was more successful later in Siam and Cochin China. If the Portuguese power east of the Red Sea practically disappeared as the nation lost its old vigour, the Dutch held fast to most of their early settlements, and even enlarged their power in Java and Sumatra. Ships laden with eastern spices still drop anchor in broad Maas below busy Rotterdam, as in the days of Reuter and Van Tromp; and to this day social life at The Hague derives some of its complexion from the returned planters of Batavia.

The new empire of Germany also appeared in Asian politics. Prussian travellers and merchants covered the Levant with their wares, and reached further afield to compete in the commerce of India and China. A German railway to Bagdad was projected and begun, which was to transform the Middle East into a commercial hinterland of Prussia—and political power often begins with commercial supremacy. The Emperor Wilhelm II. rode in state through the streets of Jerusalem in the year 1898; and a few months previously Germany had obtained her first foothold on Chinese soil, when Kiaochau in Shantung was occupied, on 14th November 1897.

But apart from these movements, which while still in their infancy looked small in comparison with the adult sway of the British in India, another and far greater expansion of European power over the East had long been in progress.

The Russian Empire.

There is another Asia beyond that soft and luxurious clime in which bloom the roses of Hindustan and the tea-gardens of Ceylon; there is the vast bleak north, where arctic blasts sweep unchecked over thousands of miles of dismal tundra waste, the earth so frozen that it cracks, the air so cold that birds sometimes fall dead upon the wing. 'The motions of forest and glade,' says a traveller in that dreary region, 'are not slumbering only, but frozen and dead; the birds and bees have flown to far-off nests and hives; the winds seem to be pent up in caves, sunlight to have found a gloomy prison, and life an everlasting grave.' In summer indeed the district is astonishingly hot and fertile; but while summer is a matter of a few short weeks, autumn flees and spring delays as the land lies for months in the pitiless, unbroken grip of winter.

It was a natural belief, born of their dismal habitation, and held by some at least of the barbaric nomads who wandered over the Siberian steppes, that the enraged evil spirits to whom sacrifice must be made had torn up and in places almost destroyed the good earth which beneficent powers had created for the benefit of man.

Over this land, this half a continent, which reaches from the Arctic to the Himalayas, from the Urals to the Pacific, Russia gradually advanced to the east and the south.

The roots of her expansion, indeed, lie deep in the past, reaching back to the time when the traders of old Novgorod first penetrated beyond the Ob River at some period during the ninth century. A few of the Siberian tribes were reduced, a few even paid tribute; others were vaguely known as mysterious strangers whose dwelling was shut in by lofty mountains near an arm of the sea, and who were ever struggling without success to hew a way out of their rocky prison, able meanwhile to hold intercourse with the outer world only through a little opening in the rocks from which they thrust an iron finger and bartered furs for iron.

The free commercial community of Novgorod fell before the autocracy of Moscow in 1471; but Russian unity was not won at the cost of Russian expansion. The Muscovites enlarged the conquests of the Novgorod traders; but the princes of the White Stone City, as Moscow was called, conquered with fire and sword and not by barter. Scorning the terrors of a Siberian winter, the army of Iwan IV. crossed the Urals in three successive expeditions: forty villages were captured; fifty petty chieftains and their tributaries were made prisoners, and by Easter of the year 1500 the Slav dominions stretched some distance beyond the Ob.

Thenceforward Russian expansion set as definitely towards the Orient as Spanish expansion towards the Occident. Their Teuton neighbours were hemmed in by Poles and French, and they had no sea-power ; their expansion, though they spread eastwards to Riga and changed the Slav city of Borislávia to the German city of Breslau, was hampered on all sides. The more fortunate Russians found Siberia occupied by tribes which had no cohesion, and little knowledge of defence ; and the Slav conquest of Northern Asia became definite and permanent.

Missionaries of the Orthodox Church went forth across the Urals and the Ob ; and though often martyred for their faith and seemingly unsuccessful in their labours, their growing influence showed when century after century small Byzantine churches rose among the Siberian wilds. And each church became the centre of a little Slav village-stronghold, an outpost of the Russian people in the wilderness.

The merchant followed the missionary, as British traders followed the steps of Livingstone in South Africa ; the soldier often preceded the trader, as the British troops opened the way for commerce in the Sudan ; and Russian exiles laid the foundation of a new European population in Northern Asia, as British exiles had done in North America when England was torn by political strife.

The physical barrier of the Himalayas, and the human barrier of the Mongol race, barred the Russian path to the south. But India seemed threatened when Merv was occupied in 1882 and Pendjeh taken three years later, Russian influence thereby becoming supreme in Turkestan ; and the long duel between Britain and Russia for predominance in Persia had already begun early in the nineteenth century.

Eastwards, too, the Pacific Ocean was reached, and Russia in Asia now spread to the Behring Straits, even for a time including the Alaskan territories of North America. From oversea expansion, it is true, the great Slavonic Empire recoiled; but her diplomats and traders had already cast envious eyes on the self-sufficing isolation of China and Japan.

The two chief nations of the Mongol world were as yet untouched by European influence. One Dutch vessel arrived yearly at a Japanese port, and sailed again for the West: to such mean proportions had intercourse been restricted with the strangers since the Japanese rose in anger against the religious missions of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, exterminating in one pitiless massacre both the native Christians and the too zealous Latin propagandists of the Catholic faith.

The Growth of European Influence in China.

And in China also the same spirit of contemptuous aloofness was shown. The isolated station of the Portuguese at Macao remained the one relic of St. Francis Xavier's magnificent dream of converting the entire country to Christianity—a task which his premature death in 1552 prevented him from even beginning. And though the English began to trade in China tea at Canton a century later, their main energies for nearly two hundred years were directed to India and Southern Asia. Not until the Victorian age, in fact, did British dealings with China become of real importance; and even so late as 1830 our traders lived there only on sufferance, growing wealthy it is true, but subjected to daily insults and ignominy from a native population which hated all alien intrusion.[1]

But about the time when the first English traders appeared off the Chinese coast, Russia likewise began to press on the western flank of the Celestial Empire, in that endeavour to reach the Pacific which was even then the ultimate goal of her statesmanship. A consistent policy brought her more success than attended the purely commercial efforts of the

---

[1] See ch. vi.

British; from time to time, however, she was forced to withdraw some of her advances.

In what is apparently the earliest treaty concluded between China and Russia, in the year after the great English Revolution of 1688, the second article stipulated that the fortress constructed by the Russians at Yacsa (Albagin) was to be demolished. Hunters and thieves—the distinction is not always finely drawn in an unsettled country—who owned allegiance to either state were not to cross into the territories of the other; offenders on either side were to be punished, and fugitives and deserters to be surrendered; while the third article provided that 'all that had passed up to the present, of whatever nature it might be, should be buried in perpetual oblivion.'[1]

But the future soon constructed another past which could not be so lightly sepulchred; and if the particular fortress that was to be demolished in 1689 was not reconstructed, others as menacing quickly appeared on the Chinese frontier.

The influence of Europe, at once aggressive and attractive, was too potent to be repelled for ever, even from the most exclusive provinces of Asia. The jealous barriers of the East were not strong enough to prevail against the surging tides of the West after the first half of the nineteenth century had passed away; and while Russian power grew stronger in Mongolia and Manchuria, a series of wars between Britain and China opened the maritime gates of the Celestial Empire to occidental trade.

Large settlements of European merchants now established themselves in the Chinese Treaty Ports, as the trading centres which were opened to European commerce were named. Once more the missionary followed the merchant, or even preceded him into the interior;[2] while the European engineer and the capitalist sought, in a land whose roads were little more than rough tracks, and whose industrial and mineral wealth was hardly developed at all, a fresh outlet for their energies and a new field for profit.

---

[1] Hertslet's *China Treaties and Orders in Council,* in the publications of the British Foreign Office.

[2] The work of the China Inland Mission, which was begun in 1865, deserves particular mention in this connection.

European Ideas adopted by Japan.

While China remained distrustful of the West, and still clung to methods sanctified by the usage of four thousand years, a more striking victory for European ideas was shown by the voluntary submission of Japan. The island empire of the East had retained its semi-feudal institutions unimpaired until the third quarter of the nineteenth century; but the new western doctrines, which had hardly stirred one single leaf of the tree of thought in China, now produced a violent convulsion in the land of the Mikado. After a revolutionary civil upheaval, in which perished nearly all the customs and habits of the historic past, Japan flung off the graceful garment of national traditions, and set her face steadily towards the West.

Her students flocked to the schools and universities of Europe. Her traders studied the markets and manufactures of America and Britain. Her nobility observed the inventions and the discipline which had given to European troops the military dominance of the world. Her army was based on the German model, her navy on the British; and both were brought to a state of efficiency which neither of her teachers could excel.

Other nations indeed have sometimes imitated the institutions of foreign people, and adopted an alien civilisation. But the unaccustomed garments have too often been a pathetic misfit; with the Japanese alone has the hazardous experiment succeeded. And as the goddess of wisdom and war in ancient fable sprang armed into the world from the forehead of the lord of heaven, so was the entrance of Japan among the great powers in the nineteenth century. Without warning, she emerged from a negligible island kingdom, self-contained within her own boundaries, to stand before all comers as the champion of Asiatic independence and the assimilator of European ideas.

A war with China in 1894 established the military reputation of the islanders; a few years later patriotic ambition was already preparing for the supreme contest with Russia;[1] and in the terrible Russo-Japanese conflict of 1904-5 the arts of the West were triumphantly turned against a Western power, when for the first time since the Asiatic hordes descended upon the ancient Roman world an Asiatic army was victorious over Europeans in a first-class war. That war demonstrated that there might be unsuspected limits to the political dominance of Europe over Asia.

But the victory of Japan was the final condemnation of Asiatic methods. Only by imitating Europe could Asia prevail against Europe; and if Europe owes the soul of her ancient religions to Asia, Asia in return owes her modern material advance to Europe.

The moral of the war was not, however, fully appreciated at the time, either in Europe or among the white races as a whole, some of which now began to fear that the Orient might prove too apt a pupil of the West; or in Asia, where the possible conquest of the world's industries by the Mongolian peoples raised a new spirit of unrest among the ancient kingdoms of the East.

It was argued, indeed, that if one oriental people could defeat the European intruders as Japan had done on land and water, other Asiatics could likewise throw off the ungrateful yoke of dependence; and the disturbances which ensued in India, the miserable years which followed the grant of a constitution in Persia, and especially the fundamental change of attitude in the early twentieth century which at length induced many of the foremost men in China to study the learning of the West, and to welcome the construction of railroads and factories, may all be traced in part to the consequence of the Japanese triumph over Russia.[1]

---

[1] See Major-General Sir Norman Stewart's autobiography, *My Service Days*. During the military operations in China in 1900 he remarked that 'the Japanese kept a watchful eye on the Russians, with a view to events which were even then openly discussed.'

The Advance in European Methods.

But other causes, less striking at first sight if not less deep, and ultimately not less important, had been influencing and shaping the destinies of the East. As Asia came more and more under the dominion of Europe, a higher ideal of administration was evolved, in conformity with the new sense of responsibility that was now growing up towards the subject peoples of the Orient. After the close of the eighteenth century, Asiatic possessions were no longer looked upon as the mere means of enforcing a trade monopoly, which had frequently in fact resolved itself into a system of extortionate tyranny and plunder; a better age was dawning for Asia as for Africa, in which European nations began to regard their oversea dependencies in the light of trusts that it was at once their duty and their advantage to administer wisely and generously. If intrigues between rival European states who were expanding their territories from ambition or necessity were still as unscrupulous as in the past —for neither the inventions nor the culture of the Victorian age could boast of materially modifying human nature—their policy when once possession had been gained showed an enormous advance over that of their predecessors.

The change was visible throughout the East. Russia threw the rough-cast of a rude civilisation over the wild nomads of Turkestan and the savage wanderers of the Siberian plains. Large and handsome towns grew up beside the Trans-Asiatic railway; and if the more objectionable features of European life were sometimes imported by the pioneers and administrators who began to change Northern Asia into a Slavonic Canada, Russia could still point to the schools and universities which she had founded in the heart of what had been a desolate wilderness. And the Americans did more for material civilisation in the Philippines in a few years than Spain had ever done; the French likewise introduced new ideas in Siam.

---

[1] The widespread character of the new movements of unrest in Asia suggested to some observers that the East might in time throw off the dominance of the West, and of Western ideas. But in the Chinese disturbances of 1911 the revolutionary anti-Manchu party showed itself friendly to Europeans, and even advocated a constitution for China modelled on that of the United States of America. Imitation of the Occident could hardly go further.

And while some Englishmen wished to sever the connection between European nations and their Asiatic dependencies, others, at once more practical and more idealistic, made it their aim to do all the good they could to the people placed under their charge. They were not indeed always successful. Less cruel than the Spaniards, less bigoted than the Portuguese, less strictly commercial than the Dutch, the English were also less gifted with that quick intuition and sympathy which characterised the French. The deficiency was a cause both of strength and of weakness; the weakness being shown perhaps most markedly in the failure to realise that social reform and educational change would produce political unrest in India; the strength most noticeably in the life and work of such men as James Brooke, the first British Rájá of Saráwak, and Stamford Raffles, the reformer of Java and founder of the colony of Singapore.

CHAPTER II

THE EASTERN SEAS: 1579-1824[1]

There was no European dominance of Asia, and indeed there were no European settlements save those of the

---

[1] Authorities.—The *Historical Geography* of Sir C. P. Lucas gives an excellent summary of the British protectorates; but it is silent regarding our lost possessions. St. John's *History of the Indian Archipelago* is full and useful; Crawfurd's *Indian Archipelago*, from which St. John frequently quotes, is equally good, and Crawfurd knew personally from

Portuguese in Asia at all, when in the year 1579 Francis Drake first burst into East Indian waters after a daring voyage across the Pacific.

Drake in the East Indies, 1579.

His barque, the *Golden Hind*, the pioneer English vessel in the mystic district of the golden Chersonese, was cruising in forbidden seas, the secrets of whose vast wealth and luxuriant beauty were jealously guarded by the Portuguese; and Drake pressed on towards home, laden with the booty he had captured in Spanish America. He obtained indeed in passing a promise from the ruler of Ternate[1] 'to sequester the commodities and traffique of his whole iland from others, and reserve it to the intercourse of our nation'; yet the great mariner stayed not to explore the riches of that wondrous region, but pursued his way steadily until he cast anchor again in the safe shelter of Plymouth Sound.

The promise of the island chief was ineffectual, and to the superstitious it may seem that this first omen of disappoint-

---

long residence many of the districts of which he writes. Hakluyt, Purchas, and the publications of the Hakluyt Society for the earlier adventurers. Dalrymple's *Account* for the abortive settlement at Balambangan. The East India papers and the seventeenth century pamphlets published in England throw much light on the policy of the East India Company in the Malayan Archipelago. The conquest and administration of Java are described at length in Boulger's *Life of Sir Stamford Raffles*, a valuable record, although it shows traces of that excessive love of biographer for biographee which must, in the strict historic sense, be pronounced immoral, since it leads to biassed judgments and a false perspective. Raffles's own *History of Java* and his *Statement of Services* are of little value; but Lady Raffles's *Memoir* may be consulted with advantage. Her writing is not, however, free from the inaccuracies and prejudices which are said to be the privilege, although they are by no means the exclusive possession, of her sex; and the *Memoir* provides an illuminating example of wifely jealousy in the fact that the writer, who was the second wife of Sir Stamford, only mentions her predecessor in one inconspicuous footnote.

[1] It may possibly have been a remembrance of this transaction which Milton had in mind when writing of:—

'The Isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs.'—*Paradise Lost*, bk. iii.

But the allusion was more probably to the successful Dutch traders of his own time.

ment was but the foreshadowing of our continual failures in the Malay Archipelago. The men of Drake's generation had passed away before the English trade was regularly established in the Orient, and though the Portuguese were speedily deposed from their supremacy, the Dutch and not the English took their place in the East Indian islands.

Early Trading Stations.

Some English adventurers, it is true, endeavoured to found trading stations there. The sailor Cavendish, who had ravaged the coasts of Peru the previous year, appeared in the Philippines and off Java in 1586, while five years later Captains Raymond and Lancaster called at Sumatra and Penang. And the long line of magnificent islands, where tropical nature is more prodigal of her bounties than almost any other spot on earth, appealed to the imagination of the English as to other nations:[1] for the English East India Company was formed rather with the object of opening commercial relations with the rich spice districts of the Malay Archipelago than with the Indian mainland.

The first voyage of the Company's ships, under Lancaster in 1601, was to Bantam, in Java; a connection was also established with the neighbouring island of Sumatra, on which occasion a treaty was made with the Sultan of Achin, and that potentate proceeded to address a letter of friendship to the monarch of Great Britain, in which he suggested that the present of an English wife would be an acceptable token of reciprocal regard. The hint seems to have been disregarded.

But the Dutch and English traders were both striving for a monopoly of the spice islands, and commercial competition soon gave place to open war. The Amboyna outrage of 1623 ended for a time our chance of success in the Malay Archipelago, and the East India Company was now forced to abandon the stations it had established there, and to concentrate its energies on India itself.[1] Bitterly as it regretted its expulsion, the defeat was not indirectly without ulterior advantages. Had the English, like the Portuguese and the Dutch, been able to spread their influence over both the East Indian islands and the great peninsula, it is doubtful whether they would have become predominant in either. And the loss of the islands, heavy as it was, was yet a small price to pay for the eventual conquest of all India.

---

[1] See Addison's remarks on the East Indies in *The Vision of Mirza*:— 'Islands that were covered with fruit and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran in among them.'

But second sight is a rare commodity among mercantile men; and the East India Company, which realised its present loss and could not foresee its future gain, still endeavoured to obtain a footing in the East Indian islands. Nor were these efforts without some delusive and transitory success.

In 1629 an English station was established at Batavia, that city of swamps and pestilence, which was already the eastern metropolis of the Dutch. Bantam was re-occupied about the same time, and for some months in 1634 the latter place became the headquarters of the English in Asia. A depôt had already been established in 1611, at Petani on the far side of the Malay Peninsula; while in 1669 a small agency was opened at Kedah, in which one may perhaps discern the germ of the Straits Settlements of a later century.

The progress of the Dutch, however, was too steady to be resisted, and in 1682 the English were expelled from Java. The two stations on the Malayan mainland had likewise proved unprofitable; and the East India Company, foiled in one direction, doggedly turned its attention to Sumatra. A depôt was opened at Benkulen in 1684, and Fort York—subsequently called Fort Marlborough—was erected there, in spite of the native queen's threat that even if we filled her palace with gold, she would not allow a house of brick in her dominions. Other places were also occupied along the coast. Expelled by the French in 1760, the English returned to Sumatra after the Peace of Paris three years later, and the

[1] See vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. iii.

stations of the East India Company on that island were only given up in 1824, when they were exchanged for the Dutch port of Malacca. But before that time both Java and the Philippines had been won and lost again.

The Philippines Occupied, 1762.

Despite the voyages of Drake and Cavendish, the British flag was hardly known east of Malaya before the time of Captain Cook; indeed, at the end of the seventeenth century one Captain Cowley, in the course of a voyage round the world, thought it prudent to hoist the Spanish colours as he passed through the East Indian Archipelago. An English vessel in the Pacific was in those days as rare as a falling leaf in spring.

But Anson's voyage in 1741 showed that the countrymen of Drake could still emulate the exploits of the Devonian sailor, and when war with Spain broke out in 1762, the conquest of the Philippine Islands was determined on by the British Government. The East India Company, which had deprecated the extension of territory in India, was now eager for expansion further afield, and took part in an expedition fitted out from Madras, stipulating with the prudent care which marks even the patriotic passion of the trader that the Company should receive a third of the profits of the venture.

The conquest was not difficult. On 23rd September 1762, an English fleet of nine warships appeared before Manila. The Spaniards, who had not even heard of the outbreak of war, hastily improvised a scheme of defence, but though they fought with the accustomed gallantry of a brave nation, they were overpowered. After several skirmishes, Manila was stormed, and the city capitulated on 6th October.

The terms of surrender reflect little honour on the victors. The lives, properties, and liberties of the conquered were to be respected on payment of four million Spanish dollars, but, that the troops might be rewarded, Manila was to be given over to three hours' pillage. British soldiers guarded the monasteries while the city was plundered; but the three hours of barbarous licence are said to have been extended to a day and a night, or even longer. In any case, the city was not rich enough to raise the huge ransom. Although the cathedral plate was melted down, and even the archbishop's jewels were added to the spoil, not half the sum demanded could be raised. The deposed governor of the Philippines drew bills on the imperial treasury of Madrid for the deficiency, but these were protested and never paid, after the manner once before adopted by the prodigal yet bankrupt exchequer of Spain.[1]

In two centuries Spain had not thoroughly subdued the multitudinous islets of the Philippines, but the short British occupation hardly extended beyond the capital of Manila. The Spanish commandant marched into the interior, whither our troops could not follow, and though the natives and the Chinese inhabitants seem to have been friendly to the British, little was done to secure our position.

And abandoned, 1764.

The Philippines had been formally ceded in November 1762; on 31st March 1764, they were restored, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Paris. Another century and a quarter was to elapse while the islands remained in the nerveless grasp of Spain, until they again passed into the hands of an English-speaking community when in the year 1898 they were conquered by the United States of America.

The Occupation of Java, 1811-16.

More creditable, though hardly more permanent in its result, was the conquest of Java in 1811. The Dutch possessions in the Orient had fallen to the French during the Napoleonic wars; and the British, who had already seized the opportunity of conquering Mauritius and other French outposts in the Indian Ocean,[2] now turned their attention to the place which Marco Polo had reported to be the largest and richest island of the world. Lord Minto, the then Governor-General of India, had been held back for a time from attempting its capture by the direct prohibition of the home authorities; but once the opportunity of conquest came, he quickly made ready for an expedition against Java.

---

[1] Philip II. had repudiated the debts of Spain in 1597.

[2] See vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.

In June 1811, a British force of some eleven thousand men, of whom about half were native Indian troops, left for Batavia; and a proclamation issued by Minto on 4th August warned the Dutch that the future of the island lay between Britain and France, that 'the option must be made, and on that question the extinction of their metropolis had left the colonies of Holland to their own free judgment. Their country has expired.' And since 'the English came as friends' the natives were instructed to remain 'peaceable spectators of what was about to take place'; on no account were they to take up arms against French or Dutch, nor to attempt to commend themselves to the invaders by massacres and commotions.

After a few skirmishes, the defeat of the Franco-Dutch army at Cornelis near Batavia left the British masters of Java. On 18th September the island surrendered; and shortly afterwards, when Minto returned to his post in India, Stamford Raffles, the lieutenant-governor whom he appointed, began his remarkable administration.

Sir Stamford Raffles, 1781-1826.

Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles, who for his great services to Britain in the Malay seas might have left a name second to none in our imperial history, had he only been supported, instead of being hindered by the British Government, was born off Jamaica on 5th July 1781. The son of a captain in the West India trade, he entered the London office of the East India Company at an early age as a supernumerary clerk; and after a few years his steady industry gained him the post of assistant secretary in the Company's station at Penang.

He began his new duties in 1805; and although encompassed by a heavy round of official work, he yet found time to dream of the expansion of British influence among the Malayan isles and over the further East. Many another lad in a similar position must have indulged in similar dreams, abandoning them only when the dull routine of daily toil had eaten away the soul of enterprise; but for Raffles the opportunity and the fulfilment came quickly. During a comparatively short official life of twenty years, he ruled both Java and Sumatra, both of which islands might have been incorporated permanently in the empire had it not been for the ineptitude of the British Government at home; and after many public disappointments and private sorrows, and in the teeth of opposition, not only from our rivals the Dutch, but from the British themselves, he at length achieved his early ambition, and laid the foundation-stone of British influence beyond India by the acquisition of Singapore.

Raffles lived moderately and worked hard at Penang, studying the language and institutions of Malaya when not engaged in routine work; and from the knowledge thus obtained, a knowledge extremely rare at that time among European administrators in the East, sprang part at least of his sympathy with the people over whom he was placed in authority.

Some of his later acts seem to show that Raffles's knowledge of Malaya was greater than his insight into the character of its inhabitants; certainly his zeal for reform sometimes outran his discretion. But he was invariably kind and affable to Europeans and natives alike. He was described by a Malay as being 'always in deep thought; most courteous, and with a sweet disposition: he spoke in smiles. Wherever he ruled, he moved freely among the people, without bodyguard or protection; and while his chief desire was that the administration should be not only without fear but without reproach, he made many efforts to elevate the Malays and to wean them from the barbarous customs which other Europeans had seldom attempted to check.

His policy may not always have been wise, and it was not always successful; his reforms were at times too rapid, or even radically unsuited to the soil on which he experimented. But his very failures in this respect reflect honour on him, and on that idealist strain in his character which is noticeable among his contemporaries in such men as Bentinck in India and Brooke in Saráwak. Among European rulers of non-European races Raffles was one of the first of a new and higher type, an offspring of the New Humanity whose doctrines were leavening Western thought; for he looked upon the power which he possessed, not as a means of tyranny and extortion, not even solely as a means of extending the traffic and influence of his country, but as an occasion for doing good and elevating those with whom he was brought into contact.

His opportunity had now come, for Minto had left Raffles with practically autocratic power in Java. And enough abuses had grown up during the long Dutch administration of that island to whet the reformer's zeal for internal reorganisation; while the prospect of extending British power over the whole of the Far East, of suppressing the pirates who plagued the Malay seas, of stopping the slave-dealing which was the scourge of the Malay tribes, and of opening up communication with China and Japan, was sufficient to occupy many years of arduous labour.

The ideal of Raffles was partly realised during his energetic administration of Java. A successful expedition was sent against the Sultan of Palembang in Sumatra in 1812; and the good generalship of Gillespie, the officer in command,[1] secured from that humbled sovereign the cession in perpetuity of the two islands of Banca and Billiton, either or both of which it was intended to use as a naval base. Attempts were likewise made to extend British influence over those parts of Java which had still maintained their independence under the Dutch; an expedition was fitted out against Sambas, a pirate state of Borneo, in 1812; and Raffles was already considering the possibility of breaking down the barrier which Japan had long imposed on all political and commercial intercourse with every European nation save Holland.

---

[1] Gillespie was a recklessly brave Scot, who in later years quarrelled with Raffles and brought several charges against him. These are shown by Boulger to be unfounded; but Gillespie seems to have been as reckless in private life as in war.

In Java itself a whole series of rapid reforms was meanwhile inaugurated. 'While we are here,' said Minto in memorable words, foreseeing that the British occupation of the island might be only temporary, 'let us do all the good we can'; and the Governor-General began by abolishing the old monopoly of commerce, by declaring the trade of the island free and open to all, by forbidding the practice of torture and mutilation, while provisionally preserving the existing Dutch laws, and by providing that the Dutch as well as the British should be eligible for all offices of trust without distinction of nationality.

The abolition of an oppressive monopoly was of great immediate benefit to the island; but the evils from which Java suffered went far deeper. Although the Dutch Empire had been founded on the freedom that had only been won at the price of a long and terrible struggle with Spain, the Dutch colonial policy was as exclusive and as narrow as the Spanish. In some respects, indeed, it was even less liberal; for whereas the Spaniards had made some efforts, mistaken and arbitrary perhaps, but still sincere, to convert their native subjects to Christianity, the Dutch made none in Java; and while the Spaniards founded schools and universities in a few at least of their colonies, the Dutch had steadfastly abstained from such altruistic experiments, and confined themselves strictly to the steady round of commerce.

It was a settled maxim of Dutch policy that the colonies existed for the sole benefit of the mother country; but the monopoly of the Dutch East India Company, while it had made enormous fortunes for the older shareholders, had ended by reducing the Company itself to bankruptcy, and a fertile, tropical isle, whose wealth should have been inexhaustible, to comparative poverty. Immigration had been discouraged, not merely from foreign countries, but from Holland itself. Industries had been checked with the mistaken idea of maintaining the price of commodities. The annual export of coffee had been restricted to ten million pounds weight, when Java was easily capable of fifty million pounds a year. And grapes were not allowed to be cultivated at all, lest they should compete with the produce of Dutch South Africa.

To such a pass had these methods reduced the Dutch East Indies that in 1790 a state commission in Holland itself had lamented 'the increasing and exorbitant rate of the expenses, the incessant want of cash, the mass of paper money in circulation, the unrestrained peculations and faithlessness of many of the Company's servants, the consequent clandestine trade of foreign nations, the perfidy of native princes, the weakness and connivance of the Indian Government, the excessive expenses in the military department and the public defence.' A voracious monopoly had gnawed at its own vitals, until the system died of exhaustion.

But the bold reforms of Raffles quickly brought Java almost in advance of the most liberal administration of the age. In the criminal procedure of the island, trial by jury was introduced, and the old justiciary rule of the village chiefs was revived; and a first step was taken towards the abolition of slavery by the order that the imports of slaves from the native Malay states should cease. The English East India Company censured the latter change, but the old system was not reverted to during the British occupation. Industries, too, were encouraged; the coffee plantations were enlarged, and indigo was introduced. The whole system of taxation was reformed; and since imposts were now no longer farmed out, a fruitful source of abuses and extortion was stopped. Forced labour was abolished, and leases were substituted for direct contributions in kind; and when the Malay cultivator received the profits of his labour, it was speedily discovered that he was no longer so incorrigibly indolent as his Dutch masters had supposed.

But the zeal of Raffles speedily outran the wishes and intentions of his employers. The original aim of the British Government in occupying Java had been merely destructive. Where Minto and Raffles had endeavoured to found a stable and prosperous British dependency, from which British influence might radiate thoughout the whole of Malaya, the home authorities only desired to damage a foreign colony; and instructions had even been given by them that the Dutch fortifications in the island were to be destroyed, and the weapons and stores distributed among the natives.

Such wanton stupidity, which would have retarded instead of advancing the spread of European civilisation in the Orient, was disregarded by both Minto and Raffles; but unhappily neither the British Government nor the East India Company realised the value of their new possession. Once again the old tragedy of British politics was enacted: what had been won by adventurers and ruled by statesmen was to be thrown away by diplomatists. At the Congress of Vienna in 1814 it was agreed to restore to Holland all the dominions of which she had been in possession in the eastern seas on 1st January 1803.

Java Abandoned, 1816.

Raffles protested, and was recalled. On 16th August 1816, Java was handed over to Holland, and a splendid episode in our history brought to an unworthy close. The transfer was regretted by all but the Dutch: and it is related that a Malay chief, on being asked his opinion of the change of masters, compared the island to a beautiful young widow who, having lost a harsh and withered old husband, had since enjoyed the caresses of a gallant and lusty young lover. Cannot you imagine, said the native, with what feelings she will receive the discovery that her first husband is restored to life, and coming again to claim her?

The Sumatra Stations Abandoned, 1824.

Java was thus lost to Britain; but the East India Company still held a footing in the less favoured neighbour isle of Sumatra. The station at Benkulen was maintained, although at a heavy annual loss,[1] for the trade in pepper; but it was a backward, neglected, and unpopular spot. When Raffles arrived there as Governor on 20th March 1818, after a short holiday in England, he described it as 'the most wretched place I ever beheld. I cannot give an idea of the state of ruin and dilapidation which surround me. The roads are impassable; the highways in the town overrun with rank grass; Government House a den of ravenous dogs and polecats.'

Such a man in charge of such a country was not long in discovering that 'a complete and thorough reform was indispensable'; and Raffles set about the work of reorganisation with the same energy which had characterised his administration in Java.

The slaves were emancipated and the gaming-dens closed, although the loss of revenue from both sources involved a censure from the East India Company; a native school was established, and missionaries were brought over. Raffles hoped that education and religion would improve the degraded condition of the natives; but while the school 'fully answered expectations,' the missionaries were 'too few to do much—instead of three we ought to have three hundred.'

---

[1] In a paper given by Raffles to Canning he reckoned the annual loss to the East India Company of the Benkulen station at £50,000. Others calculated it at double that sum. But the English policy in Sumatra was as short-sighted as that of the Dutch in Java; for when the (London) Society of Arts offered a prize for the cultivation of cinnamon and cochineal in 'our own territories in Sumatra' in 1758, the English East India Company declined the offer, lest the Dutch should get possession of so valuable an article. They might as reasonably have declined to deal in money, on the ground that the Dutch used it as well as themselves.

Nor did they altogether carry out his wishes. Knowing as he did the character of the Malays, he believed that the Christianity of Europe was in many ways unsuited to them; and he had hoped, while in Java, to introduce 'a new system altogether, founded on the principles of Christianity, and modified according to the temper of the people [which] would be far better than the naked revelation at once, which they would neither admire nor relish.'[1] But it seems that the preachers would by no means modify their doctrines to suit the taste of their hearers. In Java the experiment came to an abrupt close, for the Dutch on their return in 1816 refused to countenance any missionary work among their subjects, and even destroyed a Javanese translation of the New Testament; and Sumatra was not more fortunate.

The Dutch had always been jealous of the English stations there, which they regarded as an infringement on their monopoly in an island that they claimed as their sole possession, although they had hitherto done little to develop it. And while the British Government cared nothing for Benkulen, the East India Company was likewise tired of a station which was a serious drain on its exchequer. After long negotiations, a treaty was signed in London on 17th March 1824, between Britain and Holland, by which Malacca was given in exchange for our possessions in Sumatra, and England bound herself not to occupy any islands south of the Straits of Singapore.

Britain abandons the Eastern Seas, 1824.

By that disgraceful treaty British diplomacy completed the work it had begun at the Congress of Vienna ten years before. The victor in the Napoleonic wars again submitted to the vanquished. England gave everything, and received practically nothing in exchange. She gained a decaying city on the mainland, whose commerce and population were diminishing year by year; and for that miserable relic of the past she resigned all claim to the great islands of the eastern seas whose natural wealth and fertility assured them a brilliant future.

---

[1] Letter, 10th February 1815. Precisely the same problem troubled the fathers of the Christian church in Europe when preaching the Gospel to the northern barbarians; and it is still a perennial difficulty of the missionary. The whole question is discussed at length in the sixth volume of this work.

From that time the Malay Archipelago was almost a closed book to Britain. Some of her merchants traded there, but they could gain no permanent footing in competition with the exclusive Hollanders. Some of her adventurers landed in Borneo and elsewhere; but the work of the greatest of these, James Brooke, the Rájá of Saráwak, was blighted for years by the evil shadow of the Treaty of 1824. Britain's opportunity in the East Indies had passed, and it did not return.

The Failure in Borneo.

Elsewhere in the Malay Archipelago attempts had been made to establish British influence, but with equally small success. English traders had appeared in Borneo early in the seventeenth century at about the same time as the Dutch, but in neither case had much profit been reaped. An English station was also opened at Banjarmasin, a port on the south coast of that island, in 1700; but in 1707 our traders were driven out by the natives. Another settlement in that place a century later was abandoned in 1818, seven years after its foundation, not because it had failed, but because the Dutch were afraid it might succeed, and the British Government bowed to the remonstrances of its old rival. And an earlier attempt to found a station at Balambangan, an insignificant island off the northern shores of Borneo, had ended in yet graver disaster.

The Failure in Balambangan.

When the British captured Manila in 1762, they found among the prisoners there the Sultan of Sulu, ruler of the chain of islands which lies between the Philippines and Borneo. That potentate was set at liberty; and as a reward for his freedom, he was prevailed upon to cede to the British the isle of Balambangan.

He could do nothing but agree: the British flag was hoisted over the place in 1763, and a few years later the East India Company established a minor settlement there. But the Sultan of Sulu, perhaps influenced by Spanish intrigues, seems to have regretted the loss of Balambangan; and the prospect of a rich booty appealed to his predatory instincts.

On 5th March 1775, the place was attacked by some three hundred Sulu and Illanun pirates. There was an English garrison of four hundred men, but only a hundred were fit for duty, the remainder having been incapacitated by the climate; and Balambangan was seized without much difficulty. Spoil to the value of a million Spanish dollars was carried off by the marauders, of which the Sultan, although nominally repudiating the action, seems to have received a considerable part; and the whole English settlement, with the exception of the governor and two or three men, was massacred.

No punishment was ever inflicted on the rascally chief; but another settlement at the same place was again attempted, and again abandoned. Another half century was to elapse before the tide of British expansion had reached so far east as to include not only Balambangan, but the adjacent territories of Saráwak and Brunei in Borneo as well.

The Failure in Celebes.

Some years later, when all the Dutch colonies in Malaya seemed about to fall into the hands of France, the British took possession of the city of Makassar in Celebes. But no effort appears to have been made to develop the industries of that rich tropical island; our occupation, indeed, was looked upon as a means of hampering the French rather than of benefiting ourselves; and in 1816 Makassar was restored to Holland. The short term of the British possession apparently left no mark either on the island or its capital.

The sole results of so many attempts to enlarge our possessions among the islands of the further East were thus the eventual establishment of a British protectorate over a relatively small part of Borneo, the remembrance of a brief but brilliant occupation of Java, and the obscure and tedious records of several failures. During a long series of commercial wars the British had ousted the Dutch in India, in South Africa, and in America; but they had themselves been ousted by their rivals in East Indian waters.

Causes of the Failure.

The reason of the British failure is not far to seek. In the Malay Archipelago, as in South America, their policy was vacillating and their efforts were spasmodic; they could no more resist the steady advance of the Dutch in the one than of the Spaniards in the other. And even when they at last gained a footing in the East Indies, the success was rendered of no effect, for the Imperial Government abandoned its new possessions at the very moment when Stamford Raffles was about to make them valuable.[1]

It is true that the Imperial Government often deprecated the expansion of the Empire in other parts of the world, and that British public opinion sometimes supported that attitude of timid unselfishness. But it was very rarely that the fruits of expansion were rejected as they were in the East Indies. The authorities in England generally grumbled and acquiesced; and if the new territory prospered, after a decent interval they perhaps forgot to cavil, and took credit to themselves for a farseeing and statesmanlike policy which they had originally opposed and condemned.

Yet the work of Stamford Raffles was not altogether thrown away. If Britain on two occasions deliberately abandoned the results of his labours in Java and Sumatra, if she failed to establish her power in the Malayan islands, she at least succeeded after a time in dominating the Malay Peninsula, which shares, if it does not command, the maritime trade of the Far East; and it is mainly due to the energy and foresight of Raffles that we owe the preservation of one port at Malacca, the development of a second at Penang, and the acquisition of the third and most important at Singapore.

---

[1] It is curious that Canning, the author of the celebrated couplet,

> 'In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch
> Is giving too little and asking too much,'

was as weak in dealing with the Dutch pretensions in the Eastern Seas as any other British statesman of the time.

CHAPTER III

THE MALAY PENINSULA: 1786-1910[1]

When St. Francis Xavier sailed in 1552 from the Portuguese station of Malacca on that heroic effort to convert the Chinese to Christianity which was cut short by a premature death, he shook from off his feet the very dust of an ungrateful city. The people were amazed and sorrowful at his departure; but their Vicar-General spoke a last word: 'How? Is this parting for ever?' he asked; and Francis answered sadly: 'As it pleases the mercy of God!' A few months later the body of the saint was brought back to Malacca from Canton on its way to Goa, where it rests to this day.

The power of Portugal was then at its zenith in the eastern seas; but a century later, in 1640, Malacca was seized by

---

[1] Authorities.—The works on the Indian Archipelago, as before; Boulger's *Life of Raffles*, for the acquisition of Singapore; Newbold's *Straits of Malacca*. In Boulger's work the evidence as to Farquhar's claim to the foundation of Singapore is fully examined and refuted. Buckley's *Anecdotal History of Singapore* is extremely valuable; it contains every item that could be of use to any enquirer into the past of Singapore, set out simply and concisely in the form of annals. Earl's *Eastern Seas in* 1832-34 is of interest, despite its inaccuracies. *A Midshipman in Search of Promotion* gives a racy account of the suppression of pirates in the Malay seas. The *Logan Journal* is often valuable. Isabella Bird's *Golden Chersonese* contains vivid descriptions of the Straits Settlements; Angier's *Far East Revisited* throws much light on the commercial side. Sir Frank Swettenham's books—*The Real Malay*, *Malay Sketches* and *Unaddressed Letters*—give by far the most intimate pictures of Malaya; his historical sketch of *British Malaya* is useful for the Federated Malay States.

Holland, from whom it passed in 1795 to the British, with many other of the Dutch possessions in Asia. The Portuguese never recovered from the loss of what was then the chief trading centre of the East Indian Archipelago, whither came spices from neighbouring and distant islands, and tea and fabrics from China; but Malacca itself suffered more severely from its second change of masters.

Malacca, 1795.

The British had already established themselves further north on the Malay Peninsula at Penang, and their tenure of Malacca being uncertain—the place was, in fact, restored to the Dutch from 1818 to 1824—they did all in their power to divert its commerce to the rival port. The attempt was not unsuccessful, nor was it perhaps difficult. The harbour of Malacca was shallow, and in many ways inconvenient for vessels of any size; and its trade being almost entirely of a transit character, any place which offered greater facilities necessarily undermined the prosperity of the older settlement.

The people, indeed, indignantly refused to desert their homes; but the fact that the not very considerable European population dwindled from year to year shows that the continual reduction of trade entailed a reduction of population. In the year 1827 the European inhabitants numbered two hundred and forty-five; in 1881 they were but thirty-two, of whom twenty-three were males, mostly engaged in the government and supervision of the indolent Malays, the natives of the place, and the large body of Chinese immigrants, who worked in the older tapioca and rice fields, or in the more modern rubber and tea plantations.

Malacca became a city of memories, a place of the past. In the lively description of Isabella Bird, who visited it towards the close of the nineteenth century, it possessed 'no politics, little crime, rarely got even two lines in an English newspaper, and did nothing towards making contemporary history.' The Malays dreamed away their life in the surrounding jungle; the Portuguese half-castes dreamed away their life in the town.

The fortifications which had rendered the port impregnable, at least to Asiatic attack, were demolished. The Dutch Stadhuis was converted into government offices for the few Englishmen whose presence was necessary for administrative purposes. And the older Portuguese cathedral, for many years the furthest outpost of the Christian Church in the Orient, fell into ruins. Its floors became covered with matted weeds, where the snake and the lizard made their homes above the graves of the great pioneers who had established the Latin power in the Eastern seas; its walls were overgrown with the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics; and while the scent of the sweet stephanotis supplanted the odour of incense, the heavy blooms of the passiflora and alamanda decked the crumbling altar in a deserted temple of the Catholic faith.

Penang, 1786.

The island of Penang, for which Malacca was sacrificed, had been bought by an English trader named Light from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786 for an annual payment of 6000 dollars; and it was occupied on 12th August of that year. The East India Company repudiated the arrangement, but not the possession, in a manner more satisfactory to business than to strictly honourable dealing; and fourteen years later a tract of land on the Malay Peninsula opposite was acquired, in order to suppress the depredations of pirates in the straits; and for this new province—which was called Wellesley in honour of the Governor-General of India—an additional 4000 dollars were paid annually.

Singapore, 1819.

But Singapore displaced Penang as speedily as Penang had displaced Malacca. A small and apparently useless island before its acquisition by the British in 1819, its geographical position soon rendered it the chief mart of southern Asia, and within a few years a leading centre of the transit trade of the world.

The acquisition of the 'lion city'—as the word Singapore is believed to mean—was due solely to Sir Stamford Raffles.[1]

---

[1] He had been knighted for his services in Java.

His quick eye saw the potential value of this deserted and robber-ridden isle; his energy secured it. His mind, which was not too deep to be practical, and not too practical to be imaginative, looked far beyond the immediate advantage of one or other British outpost in the East to the general interest of our oriental empire as a whole; and when his earlier vision of a British protectorate over the East Indian Isles faded like the mirage before the weary but still hopeful traveller, in 1818 he determined at least to secure the establishment of one definite centre for British trade in the seas of the remoter East. Java had been abandoned; the station in Sumatra, of which he was Governor, was carried on at a heavy loss. Malacca was restored to Holland, and Penang was too far north to counteract the Dutch pretensions to a monopoly of the Malayan Straits. 'The Dutch possess,' wrote Raffles sadly, 'the only passes through which ships must sail into this archipelago—the Straits of Sunda and Malacca; and the British have now not an inch of ground to stand upon between the Cape of Good Hope and China; not a single friendly port at which they can water or obtain refreshment.'

Singapore had already, indeed, been offered to the British a century before Raffles had set foot in Asia. One Captain Hamilton, of an English East Indian vessel, recorded in his travels that 'in the year 1703, I called at Johore on my way to China, and he [the Sultan of Johore] treated me very kindly, and made me a present of the island of Singapore. But I told him it could be of no use to a private person, though a proper place for a company to settle a colony in.'[1] The East India Company, however, had no such ambitions; and the Dutch yet remained supreme in the Malay Archipelago.

But Raffles had not long been at Benkulen in Sumatra before he addressed Lord Hastings, the Governor-General of India, as to the necessity of obtaining a footing south of Malacca to secure the free passage of the Straits to British trade. 'The island of Singapore, or the districts of Old Johore,' he wrote on 1st January 1819, 'appear to me to possess peculiar and great advantages'; and a few days later he visited the spot. The local chief was willing to sell a place which seemed to him of little use; and on 6th February a treaty was made with the Sultan of Johore and the chief of Singapore, by which the British agreed to pay 5000 dollars annually to the former, and 3000 to the latter, in return for which the Asiatic princes ceded Singapore to the British and pledged themselves to grant 'no treaty or settlement to any other Power, European or American.' On the same day the Union Jack was first flown over the island.[1]

---

[1] *New Account of the East Indies*, quoted by Buckley.

The Dutch were furious; the English at home were dubious; and the Governor of Penang was both fearful and angry. Had it not been, in fact, for the support which Lord Hastings gave to Raffles, Singapore would have been abandoned almost as soon as it was occupied. The British Government, said a friend of the Raffles family, 'were most excessively angry' at the acquisition, and the East India Company drafted a strong resolution condemning the work of their servant in the Orient. 'We express our decided disapprobation,' they stated, 'of the extension in any degree to the Eastern Islands of the system of subsidiary alliance which has prevailed, perhaps too widely, in India,' and they concluded by deprecating the 'intemperance of conduct and language' to which, in their opinion, Raffles had given way. The soul of a commercial corporation still shows through the despatches of its sovereign directors; but it may be alleged in their excuse that their finances were exhausted by the long wars of Lord Hastings in India itself, and that the administration of Raffles, brilliant and successful as it ultimately was, had, both in Java and Benkulen, proved in its earlier stages a source of increased expense and of not necessarily enlarged revenues.

---

[1] There are extraordinary discrepancies as to this date. Lady Raffles gives it as 29th February—a day which finds no place in the calendar; and Boulger as 29th January, a week before the treaty, in which latter he is also a day out. I have followed Buckley, who examines all the evidence.

The anger of his employers, however, came too late; against their will they were again involved in new responsibilities and endowed with fresh territories. But the place which had been so unsparingly denounced soon justified its acquisition, and in less than a decade Singapore was admitted to be the key of the Malay seas. Within a year, Colonel Farquhar, the Governor of the island, stated that its trade 'already far exceeded what Malacca could boast of during the most flourishing years of its long continuance in our possession. One of the principal Chinese merchants here told me that he would give 500,000 dollars for the revenues of Singapore five years hence. Merchants of all descriptions are collecting here so fast that nothing is heard in the shape of complaint but the want of more ground to build on. . . . In short, this settlement bids fair to become the emporium of eastern trade.'

Singapore thus prospered from the beginning, and Raffles continued to attend to his 'one political child,' as he affectionately termed the place, with true paternal care. Within a fortnight of its acquisition a temporary Government House was run up—a not very substantial structure, whose sides were merely 'rough planks and Venetian windows. . . . After a Sumatra squall, inquiring glances were cast up to discover whether the house was still there or in the valley behind it.'

This unpretentious dwelling was in time displaced by a suitably imposing edifice; but more important work was meanwhile carried out in other directions. Singapore was not suffered to grow in that haphazard fashion which is unfortunately so typical of English enterprise at home: lengthy building regulations were drawn up, and considerable care was given to the planning of the town. A code of laws was introduced, and Raffles, pursuing the same enlightened policy which had marked his administration in Java and Sumatra, established a school for the education of the natives. The East India Company, indeed, still true to that consistent commercial outlook which it had maintained for over two centuries, censured the latter foundation as premature, on the ground that it was uncertain whether Singapore would remain a British possession; but the place was kept open, and after many vicissitudes, it developed into the Raffles's Institute, whose work has since become a civilising factor of very considerable value.

Misfortunes and Death of Raffles.

But Stamford Raffles did not long remain to further the interests of Singapore. He had won much from the tropics for his countrymen; but the hand of the tropics had lain heavy upon him. His first wife had fallen a victim to the pestiferous climate of Batavia in Java, and for a time he was now left 'a lonely man, like one long since dead.' His own health had suffered, and he returned to England 'wretchedly thin and sallow, with jaundiced eye and shapeless leg. Yet I thank God,' he wrote, 'my spirit is high and untamed.' He married again while at home, but Sumatra proved not less fatal than Java. Within a few weeks five of his children by his second wife died in 1822; the following year he quitted the East for ever. Singapore, he remarked sadly, now remained 'his almost only child.'

Yet calamity had still not done with him. His vessel was wrecked on the voyage home, and all his possessions and collections, valued at some thirty thousand pounds, were lost. The Indian bank to which he had entrusted the remainder of his fortune failed some months later. And the East India Company, which had earned the reputation of treating its retired servants justly and even generously, not only refused him a pension, but claimed the large sum of £22,272, the amount by which it was alleged his salary was overdrawn. The Company's finances, it is true, were exhausted by the forward policy which Lord Hastings had pursued in India; but it seems difficult to believe that Raffles would have been dealt with so harshly had his oriental statesmanship been less progressive, and more in accordance with those commercial dealings to which the directors still desired to confine themselves.

Amid so many troubles, the life of Stamford Raffles drew rapidly to a premature close. He had, indeed, sketched out a career which should occupy his remaining years with dignity and activity in those pleasant, leisured pursuits of an English country gentleman that had solaced Warren Hastings and many another retired Anglo-Indian. He had hoped 'to turn farmer, and . . . in time become a county magistrate'; a seat in Parliament remained a more distant ambition. But his constitution, already damaged in the tropics, and now preyed on by financial worries, was sapped of its strength, and though he founded and became first president of the Zoological Society in England, he lived but two years longer.

On 5th July 1826, Sir Stamford Raffles died, aged exactly forty-five years. A few days later he was buried in the parish church of Hendon in Middlesex; but no monument marked the grave of the statesman, and it is now impossible to identify the last resting-place of one of Britain's greater sons.[1]

Not yet did his countrymen realise the great services Raffles had rendered them; but the people of Singapore were not ungrateful. When he bade farewell to the East in 1823, an address was presented to him by the European and native merchants of the island; and its terms were not those of the conventional thanks with which custom decrees that a parting governor shall be speeded on his homeward way. 'To your unwearied zeal, your vigilance, and your comprehensive views,' they said, 'we owe at once the foundation and maintenance of a settlement unparalleled for the liberality of the principles on which it has been established—principles, the operation of which has converted, in a period short beyond all example, a haunt of pirates into the abode of enterprise, security, and opulence.'

---

[1] On one of his brief visits to England Raffles met Warren Hastings, then the sole surviving representative of the older school of Anglo-Indians, who had forgotten in the quiet retirement of extreme old age the storms and controversies of his earlier manhood. Raffles likewise looked forward to a peaceful retreat when his work was done; but he survived Hastings no more than eight years.

The Development of Singapore.

Singapore, in fact, as Raffles had foreseen from the outset, 'combined extraordinary local advantages with a peculiarly admirable geographical position—a harbour unrivalled in these seas.' Few of the articles in which its merchants dealt were grown in the island itself, and hardly any came from the Malay Peninsula—the development of that rich and fertile land was postponed yet another half-century—but Singapore quickly took the place, not only of Malacca and Penang, but even in some degree of the Dutch centres of trade in the East Indian islands.

Nor were its advantages over its competitors solely geographical. Raffles had declared Singapore a free port; and while older rivals were handicapped by the levy of duties and customs from the valuable transit trade, Singapore imposed no such restrictions. Attempts were indeed often made by the Indian authorities to introduce this means of raising a revenue; but the merchants of the island, conscious of their advantage, protested successfully against every effort to hamper their commerce in this fashion. The place was founded as a commercial settlement, and an essentially commercial settlement it remained, growing with astonishing rapidity, and attracting to itself more and more the merchants and products of east and west. In 1824 the population was but 10,683; by 1849 it had risen to 59,043. Eleven years later the census enumerated 80,792 ;[1] in 1901 it had again risen to 228,555.

Its Cosmopolitan Character.

The inhabitants were cosmopolitan, and drawn from every trading city of the world, from the rising townships of the far West no less than from the ancient settlements of the East. Grave Arab merchants were jostled by keen Scottish[2] traders on the streets and quays. Malays of pure and mixed blood voyaged in barque and canoe from the neighbouring Peninsula or the Archipelago. The Hindu mixed with the Chinese kuli, strangers both in an infidel land ; and the wealthy oriental dealer competed with the great English and American business houses that were soon established on this petty island in the tropics.

Some difficulty was experienced at times in dealing with such a motley crowd. The Indian Government wished to transport its convicts to Singapore ; but vigorous protests were raised against a policy which would have made a prosperous community the guardians of the worst criminals of the great peninsula. The Chinese secret societies also often caused trouble to the administration ; and while the virtuous industry of the Celestial was appreciated, it was found impossible to stamp out his peculiar and favourite vices. And the passion of the Malays for gambling and cock-fighting likewise proved ineradicable. Stamford Raffles endeavoured to suppress those not very profitable pastimes, which he and his friends of the Evangelical School perhaps judged too severely ; but the only outcome of his interference was the corruption of the police who should have carried out his orders, and an added zest to a forbidden amusement. It is one of the difficulties of reforming the sinner that he often objects to the inconvenient deprivations which that salutary process entails; and later governors wisely let the matter alone.

---

[1] In 1824 the inhabitants were divided into 74 Europeans, 15 Arabs, 756 Indians, 1925 Bugis, 3317 Chinese, and 4580 Malays ; in 1860 the Europeans and Eurasians numbered 2445, the Chinese 50,043.

[2] An unusual number of the well-known Singaporeans of early days came from Lerwick.

The place was fairly healthy,[1] but the cost of living in the Straits Settlements was generally high: 'a dollar here,' wrote one disconsolate resident at Penang, 'does not go as far as a rupee in the other presidencies.' Existence, however, was not without social amusements. In the early days of Singapore a theatre was proposed; but though some objected to such 'tomfoolery' and the building was not erected, the love of drama was strong, and amateur performances of varying excellence were often given.[2] Sports were a regular feature, although in 1837 the staider citizens were scandalised at Sunday cricket on the esplanade; but regattas and races were a usual accompaniment of European life on the island, while the native inhabitants also celebrated their national festivals with a noisy zest that provoked disgust among those Europeans who did not appreciate the monotonous music of the tom-tom.

Piracy in the Eastern Seas.

Graver matters, however, often occupied the leading inhabitants of Singapore. Its trade, though prosperous, was subject to occasional checks;[3] and the constant hordes of pirates that infested the whole of the Malay seas were a serious annoyance to regular commerce. When Singapore was founded, said a native historian, 'no mortal dared to pass through the straits. Jins and Satans even were afraid, for that was the place the pirates made use of, to sleep at and divide their booty, after a successful attack on any ship's boat or praus. There also they put to death their captives, and themselves fought and killed each other in their quarrels over the division of the spoil.' Nor did the pirates confine their attacks to Chinese junk or Malay praus; Dutch and English trading-vessels were chased, and at times successfully plundered.

---

[1] The annual death-rate of 30 in the 1000 would not have been so heavy had not many Malays from the Peninsula sought medical advice at Singapore, and there died in the hospital. The latter institution, it may be remarked, was erected at the sole cost of a wealthy and generous Chinese merchant.

[2] On one occasion when a tragedy was performed, the local press recommended the too ambitious players to take up *low* comedy. But the actors were not above satirising the Governor of Singapore. The latter had once rebuked some people who cheered him publicly by remarking that 'Sincerity was not proved by loud applause'; two days later when *Bombastes Furioso* was staged, the following quip was introduced:—

'Silence in the ranks; cease, cease your braying;
Sincerity's not proved by hip, hip, hurraying.'

[3] The Chartist riots of 1848 in England severely depressed the trade of Singapore.

The whole of the eastern seas, indeed, were still, as they had been from time immemorial, lawless and unsafe: the numberless islands and straits of the Malay Archipelago offered an easy retreat to which the pillagers could retire with their booty and from which they would in due course emerge for a fresh foray; and neither British nor Dutch Governments were yet strong enough in eastern Asiatic waters to extirpate the freebooters.

Both countries took steps to suppress a common foe; but though piracy did not long survive in the districts where European settlements were firmly planted, it persisted for many years in the remoter isles, being finally subdued only when the steamboat replaced the sailing vessel. The latter was powerless in a calm to escape the Malay pirates, whose boats were propelled by oars as well as sails; but a steamer could pursue and overtake any craft in any weather. The Malay sea-robbers received a rude lesson in 1837, when the first English steamer appeared east of Singapore. The pirates saw the smoke, and believed that a sailing vessel on fire had fallen into their hands; but when they gave chase they were astounded to see their supposed prey come up against the wind, and a heavy attack from the steamer's guns completed their discomfiture.

From that day piracy was doomed in the East; but its extirpation was a matter of time. Even in 1848 complaint was still made that some of the byways of traffic were unsafe; and it was partly on account of the loss caused to commerce that Singapore began to agitate her claim to be made a British naval base.

The British settlements in Malaya were at first regarded as an additional Indian presidency; but the system did not work well, and on 1st April 1867, after an appeal to England, they were formed into a Crown Colony, and henceforth known as the Straits Settlements. Seven years later the Dinding and Pangkor Islands were added to the older possessions of Penang, Malacca, Singapore, and the Wellesley Province; the haunt of pirates, and fever-stricken places overrun with jungle, these islands had been ceded to Britain in 1826, but had previously remained unoccupied.

The Agitation for British Expansion—

Such petty extensions, however, were of little profit; and the energetic business community of Singapore was already seeking fresh outlets and opportunities of expansion. In the Malay Archipelago, indeed, the way seemed barred. Java and Sumatra had long been definitely abandoned. Further east the islands were falling more and more into the power of Holland year by year. Even in Borneo, where the Dutch claim to possession was titular rather than real, the British occupation of Saráwak and Labuan evoked as strong a protest from the Netherlands Government as had the earlier cession of Singapore itself: elsewhere, save in one place, the extension of British influence appeared impossible. That place was the Malay Peninsula.

In the Malay Peninsula.

Abounding in agricultural and mineral wealth, the Malay Peninsula offered a sphere for trade at once desirable and within easy access. Singapore and Penang were but a short distance from the mainland. Malacca, an ancient city on the mainland itself, was already British; the native states were its natural hinterland. And while the English in the Straits Settlements desired to extend their influence, the Malay chiefs were not unwilling to lease a part of that territory which they were incapable of developing themselves. Even in 1823 some of the native princes had wished to see the British flag hoisted over Johore, as a protection against the Dutch. The request was refused; but a few years later a Malay sultan offered Harry Keppel, then a young British naval officer, the succession to his throne on condition of marrying his daughter. The future admiral rejected the bait with alacrity, but perhaps with regret, for the women of Malaya are not without beauty; yet in 1849 the Sultan of Johore again treated for the cession of some of his territories.

Objection of the Imperial Government.

Again the offer was refused, although five years previously the Singapore newspapers had openly discussed the question of 'acquiring some of the neighbouring native states for the purposes of agriculture'; and still nothing could be done, in face of the reticent attitude of the British Government.

But Singapore did not yet give up hope. While the *Free Press* in 1854 admitted regretfully that 'the supreme government did not wish to have any trouble regarding the politics of a quarter so distant,' it pointed out that the governors of Singapore itself were feeble; and the agitation for expansion in Malaya was renewed again and again.

For years, indeed, it appeared of no effect, and in 1868 the authorities issued a warning that seemed final. 'If persons, knowing the risks they run,' it stated, 'owing to the disturbed state of these countries, choose to hazard their lives and properties for the sake of the large profits which accompany successful trading, they must not expect the British Government to be answerable if their speculation proves unsuccessful.'

But meanwhile matters were going from bad to worse on the Peninsula. The Sultans were at war with each other. Rival claimants sprang up to dispute petty thrones. Justice and order were forgotten. Agriculture and mining, the two great industries of those rich tropical lands, were being ruined. The people were oppressed; and the horrible practice of debt-slavery—by which a man and his family were sold into bondage for a debt which he could not pay and often had never contracted—grew common.

The Miserable Condition of Malaya.

This unfortunate condition of affairs, which threatened anarchy throughout Malaya and prejudicially affected even the British stations along the seaboard, at length induced Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary in the strongest of Gladstone's Cabinets, to interpose in 1873. Five years after the Imperial Government had disclaimed all interest in Malaya, a distinct change, although not a complete reversal of the policy of non-intervention, was thus decided on.

British Intervention, 1873.

Lord Kimberley denied indeed all intention of interfering in the internal affairs of the independent Malay states. But at the same time he declared that it was incumbent on 'the British Government to employ such influence as they possessed with the native princes to rescue, if possible, those fertile and productive countries from the ruin which must befall them, if the present disorders continued unchecked.' And he suggested that it might be advisable, with the full consent of the native governments, to appoint a British officer as Resident at and adviser to each of the various Malay courts.[1]

How far the appointment of British Residents was compatible with the strict policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Malaya Lord Kimberley did not explain; nor could he perhaps have explained his action on logical grounds.[2] The contradiction of principles was soon shattered by the decisive argument of facts; the main point for the moment was that Kimberley inaugurated a new course of action, and that the results of that action, once taken, widened in an ever-increasing circle of British influence in Malaya.

---

[1] Official instructions to Sir Andrew Clarke, 20th September 1873.

[2] The same confusion of thought, between what I may call active and passive intervention, may be seen in the Egyptian policy of Gladstone's Cabinet ten years later. In that case it led to the death of Gordon; in

The Sultans proved not unwilling to have a British adviser at their courts. The people seem to have welcomed the white man as one who might improve and could scarcely aggravate their condition. The British Residents in due course took up their duties; and that there should be no room for doubt as to the purely advisory character of their position, they were not accompanied by any troops, police, or other means of enforcing their advice if it was rejected.

The sequel might have been guessed even in Downing Street. The new Residents were energetic men, who travelled the country, saw its miseries, and suggested remedies. But those remedies, though certainly excellent in themselves, were often unpalatable to the Sultans to whom they were proposed; and that for the simple but not ineffective reason that while they would have benefited the country, they would have deprived its rulers of a very considerable amount of revenue or plunder—the fine distinction between the two forms of income was not always very carefully drawn in the native courts.

One Sultan presently refused to take the advice of the British Resident accredited to him, and when the Resident persisted, the Sultan had his tormentor quietly murdered. The aggravated monarch probably thought he had heard the last of a trifling but annoying episode; but a British punitive force in time appeared in his territories, defeated him,

---

Malaya it also led to the murder of a British Resident who, like Gordon, was not supported by force. In both cases the real forward policy practically dates from the disaster. Those who amuse themselves with the might-have-beens of history may perhaps debate whether the forward policy would ever have been inaugurated had not the disasters occurred.

arrested him, and eventually executed him for the murder of the Resident. Such was the end of Kimberley's aspirations after moral suasion and non-intervention in Malaya.

The lesson was not disregarded. A military establishment, consisting of a battalion of Sikhs and Pathans, and an artillery corps with field guns, henceforth helped the Residents in enforcing their advice; and from that time the Sultans displayed considerably more readiness in accepting the counsels of the foreigners. Aided by such effectual arguments, the British soon found themselves the real rulers of the countries of Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and the nine states of Negri Sembilan.

Prosperity under British Protection.

The rest is the usual story of British energy transforming a dying land. Peace, order, and justice were restored. The administration was reduced from chaos to order; material progress was made everywhere. The mines were worked, the rubber forests of the Peninsula were cultivated; roads were built, railways constructed, hospitals founded, and schools established.

The extraordinary advance made by Perak may be taken as typical of the rest of the Peninsula. In 1895 the British Resident for that State reported that 'since 1890 the revenue has increased 40 per cent. The production of tin has increased over 50 per cent.; the export of unhusked rice is nearly twenty times what it was in 1890, and that of sugar more than double. The value of the Customs revenue has more than doubled, and that of the land more than trebled. The railway receipts last year were three times, and this year will be nearly eight times, as large as in 1890. Postal business has increased fourfold, and that of the telegraph more than doubled, while the trade has increased from 17 to 27 million dollars. With the progress and prosperity of the State the well-being of the people has kept pace. The people are better housed, better clothed, wealthier and in every sense more comfortable.'

The Malay, whose dreamy poetic nature makes him delightfully tolerant of the workaday world so long as others do the work, looked on with a detached interest at these vigorous changes; the patient, industrious Chinese, into whose hands most of the commerce of the country had passed from that of the yielding Malays, were not dissatisfied with a policy which enabled them to accumulate riches with greater security than before; nor did the British traders and planters fail to take advantage of their opportunities.

In 1895 the governments of the four states, whose population had very largely increased with increasing prosperity, were united under the name of the Federated Malay States; and fourteen years later, by agreement with Siam, the remaining states of the Malay Peninsula, as far as six degrees of north latitude, were likewise brought within the British sphere of influence. These states, Johore, Kedah, Tregganu, Kelantan, and Perlis, gave promise of advancing as quickly as their southern neighbours on the pleasant road of material prosperity; nor were their resources likely to be less profitable when developed by European methods.

CHAPTER IV

BROOKE OF BORNEO: 1839-1910[1]

On 28th May 1839, the arrival of the British schooner *Royalist*, 142 tons, Captain James Brooke, from England and Cape Town, was recorded in the Singapore Shipping Register.

---

[1] Authorities.—For the life of Sir James Brooke, the chief sources are G. L. Jacob's *The Rájá of Sarátwak*; Rájá Brooke's *Journals*, edited by Captain Mundy, R.N.; and Templer's *Private Letters of the Rájá Sir James Brooke*. The correspondence between the British and Dutch Governments relative to Borneo in 1846 was published in 1854. The more recent history of British Borneo is contained in Baring-Gould's *White Rájás of Saráwak*; and Treacher's *British Borneo*, a dull but useful work.

Two months later, on 28th July, the same vessel sailed on a cruise to Borneo; and thus began quietly and with little comment one of the most romantic and honourable episodes in the annals of the English people overseas.

James Brooke, 1803-68.

James Brooke, the captain of the *Royalist*, the future Rájá of Saráwak in Borneo, was one of those rare and splendid characters which combine the restless, daring spirit of the adventurer with the calm wisdom of the statesman. Open and sincere in speech, honest and disinterested in his dealings with all men, he united the recklessness of the Elizabethan with the justice and humanity of the Victorian; and the result was a man far indeed from unique in our annals—for thousands of unknown heroes have found no such exceptional occasion of exercising their talents—but sufficiently gifted to control an alien and savage people, to rule them as they could not rule themselves, and above all, to gain their deep affection, no less than their undying respect.

Brooke was in the full prime of vigorous manhood when he left Singapore on the voyage that was to decide his life's work. He had been born at Secrore, near Benares, on 29th April 1803, the fifth son of a civilian employee of the East India Company; and he was educated, or at least he attended for some years, at the grammar school in the ancient cathedral city of Norwich, in England.[1] Having there acquired as much learning as he thought necessary, he ran away; but the old place and his old comrades remained dear to him in after life, and the generous interest which he took in the subsequent fortunes of his school may well have helped other more aspiring students than himself. Brooke's school was henceforth the world itself.

After some time spent in the Indian army—he was wounded in the Burmese War of 1825—he returned to England, and eventually resigned his commission. Some men wear easily enough the chains of routine and hug the fetters of civilisation; but Brooke had from early youth been as impatient of an idle as of a conventional life. Though possessed of modest but still sufficient means, he could not settle down to the ordinary life of an English country gentleman; and when his betrothal was broken off and the death of his father left him well-to-do, if not wealthy, he was free to carry out any scheme of adventure that might commend itself.

---

[1] Among his schoolfellows was George Borrow, the author of *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*.

But for a time at least the way was not clear. The outspoken impatience of Brooke's letters to his friends shows that opportunity and the man had not yet met. 'I am going somewhere,' he once wrote, 'but where I know not, nor does it much signify—perhaps America.' Later he hoped to lead a crusade against the 'Dutch vagabonds in the eastern seas'; and the chance sentence shows that his mind had already taken its future direction. But a first voyage of adventure came to an untimely end, and his own qualities as leader seemed hopelessly deficient. Yet those who have known the East seldom find inspiration elsewhere, and the accidental reading of a book on Malaya decided his career.

At first, indeed, his idea was little more than a voyage of adventure to Borneo, then an island practically unknown. 'Could I carry my vessel to places where the keel of European ship never before ploughed the waters,' said Brooke; 'could I plant my foot where white man's foot had never been before, see man in the rudest state of nature, I should be content without looking to further rewards. I can indeed say truly that I have no object of personal ambition, no craving for personal reward; these things sometimes flow attendant on worthy deeds or bold enterprises, but they are at best but consequences, not principal objects.' Action stirred him: even on the voyage he was 'far better than at home—abstemious, occupied, and happy,' and soon he was to know no more of the old restless discontent.

On 1st August 1839, he dropped anchor off the western shores of Borneo. A few days later the *Royalist* sailed up the Saráwak River, and James Brooke was welcomed by the Rájá of that state on 15th August. The native ruler appeared friendly to England, but he was curious to discover which was in truth the stronger nation, the British or the Dutch. Which, he asked, was the cat and which the rat? And if the British, as Brooke assured him, were really the stronger, the Rájá wished to know whether they would enter into a defensive alliance with Saráwak. But to that question the British Government would give no definite answer for a quarter of a century.

Saráwak, 1839.

After a stay of about a month Brooke returned to Singapore, determined to revisit Saráwak in the following year, and having meanwhile obtained permission for English vessels to trade freely with Borneo. The merchants of the Straits Settlements welcomed him, but the authorities had already taken alarm. The Governor suggested that Brooke had been imprudent in his dealings with the native chief, and that the Dutch might take offence were he not more circumspect. Such was his first experience of that official timidity whose long continuance caused him to complain in later years that the British Government had but the heart of a fish.

After a cruise to the fantastically shaped island of Celebes early in 1840, where he perhaps remembered the ill-fated British settlement of Makassar, Brooke returned to Saráwak. A crisis had meanwhile arrived in the affairs of that state. In itself this was nothing unusual; but the opportunity and the man now met. A native war had broken out, and while Rájá Muda Hassim welcomed the English adventurer as one who could deliver him from insurrection, the rebels besought Brooke to deliver them from a tyrannical Rájá. His assistance became necessary to both rebels and Rájá; and when the war was over, both sides still besought him to remain.

Brooke determined to stay, and 'to become the pioneer of European knowledge and native improvement' in the land. Muda Hassim freely resigned his office. On 24th September 1841, an agreement was signed, and James Brooke, after undertaking to make a small annual payment to the Sultan of Brunei as overlord, and to respect the laws and customs of the country, began his reign as Rájá of Saráwak amid popular rejoicings. 'It is a grand experiment,' he wrote at the time, 'which, if it succeeds, will bestow a blessing on these poor people, and their children's children will bless my name. If it fails, what is it but personal inconvenience? . . . If it please God to permit me to give a stamp to this country, which shall last after I am no more, I shall have lived a life which emperors might envy.' The gratitude of his adopted people was to assure him of success in his own lifetime; the continued prosperity of Saráwak still shows that his aspiration has been fulfilled.

The English Rájá, 1841.

The existing government—if government it could be called—was wholly rotten. Its one principle was robbery and extortion. 'The big birds,' said a native chief to Brooke, 'pecked the little ones, and drove them away, and would not allow them to have food. We were little birds and were pecked very hard.' The Rájá and his chiefs had robbed the Malays; the Malays had robbed the Dyaks; and the Dyaks had concealed their goods and dependants as much as they dared. They were industrious, but they were not allowed to reap what they had sown; and even then their cup of affliction was not full, for they were often deprived of their wives and children, who were sold into slavery by their tyrants, or by moneylenders even more rapacious than the harpies who preyed upon the Hindus. The wretched creatures floated down the river for succour in the last stage of starvation, and daily begged a little rice from Brooke. He spent much of his fortune in relieving their wants, for he 'had not the heart to say nay.'

Misery and Misgovernment of the People.

'We have no one but you,' the people cried despairingly, to their white rájá. 'Will you help us? Will you restore our wives and children? If we get our families you will never repent it; you will find us true.' The troubles which came later proved it to be no idle promise.

Improvements and Reforms.

The life was indeed hard. 'I work like a galley slave, I fight like a common soldier; the poorest man in England might grumble at my diet: luxuries I have none,' wrote Brooke. Yet he loved it, and within two years good results were seen. The Dyaks were settling down, and forced labour hardly existed more; slavery was abolished, and every slave arriving in Sarávak from other countries was declared free. War was now forbidden, and Brooke 'breathed peace and comfort to all who obeyed, and wrath and fury to the evil-doer.' Other natives elsewhere, too, had heard that 'a son of Europe' was their friend, and came to him for protection. In four years Kuching had quadrupled its population; not only was there no more any famine in the land, but grain was largely stored, and some had even been exported.

The new government was founded on the customs of the people. The chiefs were consulted at every step, and the old laws and traditions of the country were written down. An open court for the administration of justice was established, and a simple code of laws introduced; but the very fines which it was necessary to impose found their way back to the people. Trade was encouraged, and though Brooke knew little of business, and hated the very name of commerce, Sarávak soon became the most prosperous state in Borneo.

But everywhere the Rájá was careful not to interfere with the customs of his subjects. 'When we desire to improve and elevate a people,' he said, with a deep wisdom that imperial races have seldom displayed, 'we must not begin by treating them as an inferior race; and this is too generally the style of our Indian rulers. . . People settled like myself too often try to create a Utopia, and end with a general confusion. The feeling of the native which binds him to his chief is destroyed, and no other principle is substituted in its stead.'

Piracy Suppressed.

There was a reactionary party among the natives which sometimes caused trouble and even bloodshed: the old chiefs regretted their lost privileges, and at least one attempt was made by them to poison Brooke, while his native adherents were elsewhere taunted with being Kafirs, infidels, and the friends of Europeans. Stern punishment, however, was meted out to these, and expeditions were likewise made against the pirates who swarmed in the Malayan seas, and damaged both native and European shipping. Brooke lamented, indeed, that the British Government had no settled policy in extirpating these pests; but whenever help was given him, good results followed.

A great battle took place with the pirates in 1849 at Point Marro, in which they were utterly defeated. Hemmed in on every side, five hundred were killed, sword in hand; their boats were broken to pieces or deserted, and upwards of fifty captured, while some two thousand five hundred of their followers escaped to the jungle. But the British authorities refused to follow up the work, and Brooke alone could do little. The hesitating instructions of the Imperial Government, he complained, were so much 'waste paper,' and he himself was 'like a fool in a farce, with fine clothes and fine names . . . but I am but a fool after all, and the character does not suit me.'

Neglect of the British Government.

He was, in fact, beginning to understand that the Imperial Government cared nothing for Saráwak or for British interests in the Far East. The same neglect which caused a refusal to expand in the Malay Peninsula, despite the protests of the merchants of Singapore, the same ignorance which nearly caused the abandonment of Singapore itself, was to hamper Brooke's little possession for many years; and not that possession only, for British interests in every part of Asia that lay beyond India were to be jeopardised by the dilatory statesmanship of London. The treaty with Holland in 1824, by which Britain had renounced all claim to territory in the Malay Archipelago, lay athwart Brooke's path in Saráwak for years.

Brooke had long wished to be a knight, not for the mere vulgar honour of the title, but 'because Sir James would be an immensely important person' in Borneo; and in 1847, on his first visit to England for eight years, he was knighted by the Queen and honoured throughout the country. Yet the British Government would give no decisive answer when he asked permission to quarter the Union Jack on the flag of Saráwak. Although it decided to annex the small neighbouring island of Labuan, and defended Brooke as a British subject against the objection of the Dutch that he was interfering in their right, it still refused to recognise Saráwak officially as a British protectorate.

It was owing to no virtue of the British Government that that country did not fall to other Powers. The Dutch were notoriously eager to add it to their possessions, and thus to extend their empire over the whole of Borneo, as they had over Java, and as they were gradually doing in Sumatra and the multitudinous minor isles of Malaya. And an American frigate had arrived in 1845, and offered immediate protection, with a treaty of friendship and commerce, if the coal mines of Borneo were ceded to the United States. The natives were true to Brooke, and no bargain was struck; but while Britain continued to hesitate and delay there could be no certainty for the future.

Enmity of the Little Englanders.

But the good work of Brooke in Saráwak was now to be menaced by the active opposition of a small but powerful section of English political opinion, and years of trouble dawned for its Rájá when he first aroused the enmity of the Little Englanders, as those were popularly called who opposed the expansion of the Empire. Brooke had committed a sin, unpardonable in the eyes of politicians who preached the doctrine of universal non-intervention, when he became ruler of Saráwak, and induced the British Government to occupy Labuan; and an opportunity for attack soon came with the destruction of the pirate fleet at Point Marro.

A garbled and inaccurate account of that affair had been inserted in a Singapore journal, the *Straits Times*, by a merchant named Woods, who cherished a spite against Brooke on account of certain commercial transactions in which a company promoted by the former had been disappointed in Borneo. A protest against Brooke's conduct was also made by the same man and sent to England with numerous signatures.

That account and that protest were quoted by a London newspaper, the *Daily News*,[1] and apparently accepted as true without verification; and the Little Englanders eagerly seized the opportunity of defaming an absent man. Richard Cobden, one of the chief lights of the anti-imperial party, was ignorant or prejudiced enough to believe that the bloodthirsty Malayan marauders were peaceful and industrious traders; he condemned their destruction as a 'fiendish atrocity,'[2] a 'murderous execution,'[3] and declared that there was 'no tittle of evidence'[4] that they were pirates or had molested us. He raised the question in Parliament; other members of his opinion followed suit, and a Commission of Enquiry was asked for. It was defeated in the House of Commons by a vote of 145 to 20, and a year later, when the subject was mentioned again, it was again rejected by 229 to 18.

But the enemies of Brooke were not prepared to abandon their prey so easily. The question was brought up time after time. The Cabinet were weak and raised no voice in his defence; and although they assured Brooke, when he visited England during the course of the controversy, that no Committee of Enquiry would be appointed, they had already

[1] On 25th June 1849.

[2] Letter, 6th December 1849.

[3] Speech, 29th November 1851.

[4] Speech, 23rd May 1850.

decided to bow before the storm. With a timidity that approached near to treachery, they only awaited his departure to announce that a Commission would investigate his conduct.[1]

The Commission of Enquiry.

But the Commission, which opened at Singapore on 11th September 1854, was little better than a farce. It was soon seen on what shifting materials the enemies of Brooke had built. No evidence was produced in support of the allegations. None of the signatories to the petition appeared at first.[2] Eventually, when a few were induced to attend, they swore that Woods had lied as to its purport. One witness stated that he was led to believe that the petition was to help Brooke. Another stated that he was told that it was to aid in the suppression of piracy. One man, whose evidence had been quoted in Parliament against the Rájá of Saráwak, had already been proved to be a thief well known to the police. And a document that was relied on to discredit Brooke was shown to be a forgery, and was repudiated by the native chiefs before whom it was placed. The Malayan witnesses would only attend when the Rájá had given them permission, and assured them that 'they were good men who called them' to give evidence. And the Sultan of Brunei, who would have refused to attend the Commission, stated that he would send no witnesses whatever, unless Brooke himself requested him to do so; and he remarked that not only was Brooke a proper person to put down piracy, but that nobody else knew anything about it.

Base Conduct of Cobden.

Such was the case upon which Cobden and his allies had based their slanders; but when it was disproved, no apology was forthcoming. 'Sir James Brooke,' Cobden had said publicly at Birmingham, on 29th November 1851, 'had gone out to the eastern archipelago as a private adventurer, had seized upon a territory as large as Yorkshire, and then drove out the natives; and who, under the pretence that they were pirates, had subsequently sent for our fleet and men to massacre them . . . a murderous execution that would end in increased cost.' Not one of these statements was true save the first; and a few simple inquiries, such as an elementary instinct of justice should have induced Cobden to make before he traduced an absent man, would have convinced him of the fact. But not only did he accept without investigation allegations to the disadvantage of Brooke, he never retracted or expressed regret for the original slander when it was shown to be baseless. Cobden was not above calling down the divine vengeance upon those whom he considered his enemies; he might at times have remembered with advantage that a divine command had also forbidden any man to bear false witness against his neighbour. But it is an unhappy truism that the passions engendered by political strife often cause even good men to forget those elementary decencies of conduct which in private life they would scrupulously observe.

---

[1] Lord Clarendon was the minister chiefly responsible.

[2] It was shown that in nineteen cases the descriptions of the persons signing the petition were incorrect.

Brooke's Indignation.

But Brooke was not one of those meek characters which can bear an unjust persecution with equanimity. 'I am no tame lion, to be cowed by the baying of a pack of hounds,' he burst out angrily; 'the Peace Society and the Aborigines' Protection Society are the aiders and abettors and advocates of as bloody a set of murderers and pirates as ever put to sea to cut throats or capture vessels.' And again he wrote indignantly: 'How can these men reconcile it before God and their own consciences to denounce an absent man, or to condemn a man unheard? They preach of peace, while they banish charity from the earth. . . . By heavens, with my passions aroused, if they were insolent, I would not answer for my not striking them in open court. Men's passions are not to be measured like yards of red tape, or weighed like reams of foolscap by any stationer in Downing Street. I told Lord Clarendon that I should never trust in the English Government again. . . . What is meant by sending a ship of war for my protection, coupled with the qualification, "not perhaps for protection so much as for the moral support it would give"? Is this ship of war belonging to the Peace Society? Are her men and her guns Quakers? Is she to bring a cargo of tracts and cambric pocket-handkerchiefs?'

Yet though his enemies failed to ruin Brooke, though some of the documents on which they had relied were proved to be base fabrications by the very commission they had themselves appointed, they had at least the satisfaction of annoying and discouraging the Rájá of Saráwak, and of injuring the British name in the eastern seas. 'Ambition has been dead in me since 1853,' said Brooke sadly some years after; and he saw at once that his subjects must discover that something was amiss. 'All they know of noble and good in government,' he wrote, 'is called in question by the very government which I have told them for years is civilised and trustworthy. They cannot understand how it has come about, but their instinct assures them that there is something very wrong, and destroys that confidence which it was once my pride to inculcate.'

More English officials were required for the service of Saráwak; but while the enquiry dragged its weary course, and the British Government could still not decide to recognise the protectorate, it was difficult to obtain them. There were many, indeed, who would willingly have served under the Rájá, but he was ever careful to warn others against making too great a sacrifice. 'All the coal mines in the world may go to the devil,' he wrote to one who would have joined him, 'but do not you come to harm to serve me. I draw upon your time, your thoughts, your patience, your friendship; but I will not draw upon your purse or your reputation.' Nevertheless a small band of followers gathered round him to share his life, his hardships, and his work for little reward.

Rebellion in Saráwak.

But the solid results of the action of Cobden and his allies were soon visible. An intertribal war quickly broke out when Brooke's authority with his people waned for a time. Piracy sprang up again; and whereas during the first year after the victory of Point Marro not a single innocent life nor one trading vessel had been sacrificed, the marauders now found little opposition. 'The British Government,' said Brooke angrily, 'have encouraged sedition and assassination'; but for the time he was helplessly ill with smallpox. And in 1857 there was a serious insurrection of the Chinese inhabitants of Saráwak; the rebels spared the mission and trading stations, but Brooke's house was burnt to the ground, and the Rájá only escaped by swimming the river and diving under a Chinese boat, before he reached the opposite shore exhausted.

The rebellion, however, cleared the air. The Rájá's subjects rallied to his aid: 'the fidelity of Malays and Dyaks was exemplary, the Government was proved to be rightly based, the fidelity of the people tried by misfortune, and our resources and revenue demonstrated to be elastic. A dead Chinaman is no more to be apprehended than a dead dog, and we have taught the living miscreants such a lesson that they will not play their tricks upon us for many a long year.'

Saráwak now 'stood isolated,' said Brooke, 'without a link to bind her to England, and I am separated from my native country.' Yet gradually the tide of adversity turned. If the Rájá was still ignored in British ports, while petty native rulers were saluted, he troubled little about that kind of homage: 'Call me king, or rájá, or minister, or dog, I care not, for what is a handful of dust compared to the destiny of a people?'

The Prospect Brightens.

But the real work that the Rájá had done in Saráwak at last appealed to England. The country had 'produced nothing under native rule, now its exports yearly may be fairly reckoned from 200,000 to 250,000 dollars, and the native tonnage yearly at 2000.' A private trading company was formed, and the enterprise proved profitable. And the unforced affection of his subjects converted some of those who had formerly opposed him; the *Daily News*, which had led the attack against Brooke in 1849, now applauded his rule.

But official recognition was still delayed, and Brooke foresaw that Saráwak must become dependent on Holland if Britain continued to refuse the acquisition. His powerful body, though not his unconquerable spirit, was worn out with waiting; he confessed himself 'weary of the world, weary of evil, weary of weakness.' And in 1858 he was stricken with paralysis while in England. The attack passed, but 'Life's fitful fever was over,' he said quietly, 'though life may be prolonged. We are in God's keeping, and I cannot go into mourning for that, or preach in the dolefuls.'

Still the British Government hesitated; and though urged by a large mercantile deputation to acknowledge Saráwak as a protectorate of the Empire, the Cabinet held to its old timid attitude. Lord Derby remarked on 'the extreme inconvenience, to say the least of it, of such undertakings as Sir James Brooke's. He looked with very great jealousy to increasing the number of our dependencies and new settlements; they were not additions of strength but of weakness.' To a later generation it may well seem that the Government was itself an element of weakness rather than of strength to the Empire which it ruled so feebly.

At length, in 1864, recognition was granted, and Brooke was henceforth hopeful of the future. His private fortune had already been spent in the service of his adopted people; but friends raised a fund to aid him and to carry on his work; a steamer—named *Rainbow*, as the emblem of hope—had been bought and sent to the East; and after a severe engagement with the pirates their power was checked, and the British and Dutch captives whom they had imprisoned were released. The Dutch had occasionally assisted Brooke to rout the

Malayan freebooters in older days, when England held back; but there was now little further need of their aid, for Saráwak seemed secure.

But the peaceful close of a stormy, adventurous life was drawing near. Brooke had never recovered the full vigour of manhood after the first attack of paralysis; and he could no longer live permanently in Saráwak.

Brooke in England.

Twice more the Rájá visited his country, but henceforth his home was in England. He purchased a small estate at Burrator in the parish of Sheepstor, on the borders of that wild but beautiful stretch of Dartmoor in Devon, which looks over towards Plymouth and the many wooded streams whose waters mingle in the broad Hamoaze; and there he waited quietly for the end, tending the little garden that surrounded his house, and helping the simple villagers of the neighbourhood, few of whom associated the vague, uncertain rumours they had heard of the great deeds of the Rájá of Saráwak in the outer world with the kindly newcomer, who played with the school-children and sent the finest delicacies from his table to the sick and infirm. 'The children all loved him,' said one of the village women afterwards; 'indeed, everybody felt happier when they had caught sight of Sir James Brooke in the day.' Brooke, too, was now contented. 'In spite of trials and anxieties, calumny and misrepresentation,' he wrote at this time, 'I have been a happy man, and can pillow my head with the consciousness of a well-spent life of sacrifice and devotion to a good cause.'

Yet his thoughts were still with Saráwak. Among his latest words was the message: 'Be just to our people. . . . Give my best love to all the good folk. . . . God bless you all!'

His Death.

A few days later, on 11th June 1868, James Brooke died at Burrator. It was the month of roses, and some of the roses from the quiet garden he had learned to love were placed on his breast before he was buried, as he had wished, under the shadow of the great beech-tree in Sheepstor churchyard.

So passed the first English Rájá of Saráwak to his rest; but his work and his name were not forgotten. The hero slept; but his spirit pervaded his successors, who have ruled to this day wisely and justly in the remote tropical dependency on the North Bornean coast.

The boundaries of Saráwak have been enlarged since the death of its first white Rájá; but other hopes of Brooke's have come to naught. He intended to expand British trade in Celebes, and promoted a mission to that island and to Siam; but Celebes in time fell to Holland, while French influence gradually became predominant at Bangkok.

Labuan, 1846.

But on 24th December 1846, the small island of Labuan and the neighbouring islands and islets had been added to the Empire, in obedience to a despatch from Lord Palmerston. The British Government was at first suspicious when the Sultan of Brunei offered this petty dependency to England; and in accordance with its settled policy of vacillation in the Far East, it hesitated long before deciding on this insignificant addition to its territories.

Brooke was at length appointed Governor of the island. 'I like this place,' he wrote a few months later, 'and I think if matters go well it promises to be successful. But it is an arduous task beginning a new settlement in the jungle.' But fever appeared, and most of the Europeans were reduced to 'miserable weak shadows'; nor was this the last of its misfortunes. The establishment was reduced in 1852, in obedience to the demand for economy in England; but the protectorate struggled on. It could boast of being the seat of a bishop of the Anglican Church, whose followers in Labuan were few, and whose ministrations were seldom required among the head-hunters of Borneo; but it could boast of little else.

British North Borneo, 1881. Brunei, 1888.

But not until the year 1889 was failure openly admitted, and the administration of Labuan handed over to the British North Borneo Company, a corporation which had been formed in 1881, and which had acquired a considerable amount of land in the greater island. High hopes were formed that these latter territories would prove extremely valuable, and one enthusiast even called them a new Ceylon;[1] but the actual work of development was slow and tedious. The administration of an Asiatic island by a board of directors in London was not easy; and it was soon discovered that North Borneo was poorer than had been supposed; while Brunei, which was proclaimed a British protectorate in 1888, was in a state of bankruptcy and decay. Its revenues, such as they were, had all been leased and sold by its native ruler; the chiefs went their own way unchecked, and anarchy and oppression prevailed everywhere.[2] From this unhappy condition the country is gradually being rescued, and the British North Borneo Company has also met with some success as a ruling body during its brief existence.

CHAPTER V

CEYLON: 1795-1910[3]

Among the first of Asiatic countries to attract the covetous attention of the European invaders in the sixteenth century was the rich and fertile island of Ceylon. Its people were friendly and hospitable to strangers; its climate was delightful; its wealth and beauty enchanted every traveller. And the place which western geographers had dimly supposed in earlier ages to form another continent, which Ovid had imagined to lie so far beyond the limits of human intercourse that it would advantage his fame but little to be known there, and which some even among the Hindus thought to be inhabited only by apes and devils, proved on discovery almost a terrestrial paradise.

---

[1] *The New Ceylon*, by Joseph Hatton.

[2] *The Singapore Free Press*, August 1900.

[3] Authorities.—Upham's translations of the sacred and profane books of Ceylon are valuable for the older traditions and history of the island. The *Historical Relation of Ceylon*, by Robert Knox (1681), is extremely curious; the author was a keen observer, and his remarks are often as acute as they are outspoken. The *History of Ceylon*, by Philalethes, A.M., Oxon. (1817), is now of little value; it has been superseded by Marshall's

Yet Ceylon, whose position at the foot of India makes it seem as much a natural dependency of that peninsula as Sicily is of Italy, had, and was destined still to have for three more centuries, as troubled a history as the gem of the Mediterranean. The Sinhalís, 'people of lion's blood,' as their name proclaimed them, had conquered the savage aborigines in the distant epoch when history and legend meet; but they were themselves continually menaced by the Indians from the neighbouring Malabar coast. Long and bloody wars were fought between the two; one invasion after another was met and repelled; and a Sinhalí historian, with the exaggeration natural to the victor, calculated that the incredible number of a million and eighty thousand Indians had been slain at one period of the strife.

The war between the island and the peninsula was religious as well as political. The Indians were Brahmans, the

Ceylon and Knighton's *History*, both good but discursive. Cordiner's narrative may also be consulted. The *Report of the Dutch Records at Colombo* (1907), by R. G. Anthonisz, is interesting and useful; it may be hoped that more selections from the archives will be printed by the Government. Many of the documents relative to the Dutch occupation of Ceylon, however, are at The Hague. Emerson Tennent's great work on Ceylon is by far the best for the general history and description of the island prior to 1860. Skinner's *Fifty Years in Ceylon* is a valuable record; Major Forbes's *Eleven Years in Ceylon* should also be consulted. Digby's *Forty Years in Ceylon* examines the position of the Eurasian population with some partiality. John Ferguson's *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year* and his *Ceylon Handbook* give an excellent account of the material progress of the island. Mrs. Heber's *Journal of a Tour in Ceylon* is worthless; but Mary A. Steuart's *Everyday Life on a Ceylon Cocoa Estate* contains a passable account of a planter's life. There are a large number of other works of this kind, very many of which are of negligible value.

Sinhalís were followers of Buddha; but it was in vain that the peaceful precepts of the latter were taught in a land of passionate and endless contentions. 'The ignorant people of this world,' said one of the sacred books of Ceylon, 'often make quarrels without considering that they are mortal. What is the use of quarrels when all are mortal?' A nation fighting for its freedom heeded neither the maxims nor the questions of its priests.

The Portuguese Occupation, 1517-1660.

But the warriors of Ceylon could never become slothful from lack of exercise for their arms; and the warlike spirit which was thus kept alive at least enabled them to make a sturdy fight against the Europeans who presently threatened their independence. The first Latin pioneers discovered the island in 1505; twelve years later a small Portuguese settlement was established at Colombo. At first indeed the Europeans were welcomed, after the courteous custom of the Sinhalís. 'The king,' said a native writer, 'brought ruin on his country by giving the same into the hands of these strangers'; their design, here as elsewhere in the Orient, was to conquer. A brutal and desolating war followed; but after a century of conflict the Portuguese were still confined to the coast. For two hundred years more the Sinhalís, aided by the lack of roads and the difficulties of communication, maintained their independence in the interior.

The Dutch Occupation, 1660-1795.

Another European nation now appeared in Ceylon. A Dutch embassy arrived in the year 1602 on a trading mission, and found itself greeted with the same courtesy which the Portuguese had abused. Good relations were soon established between the two peoples; and the Dutch, as the determined foes of the Portuguese, became the inevitable allies of the native kingdom of Kandy.[1]

---

[1] This early friendship was once jeopardised by a Dutch admiral who got drunk in the presence of the king of Ceylon. The disgusted monarch issued orders to 'bind that dog'; and in the struggle that ensued the unfortunate toper lost his life, an unwilling victim to Bacchus.

By their aid the earlier intruders were driven from Colombo in 1656, and four years later the Latin power in the island was extinct.

But the Sinhalís quickly discovered that they had only exchanged one false friend for another. For the Dutch now declared themselves the 'guardians of the king's coasts,' and proved hardly less arrogant in their bearing than the Portuguese. 'I would have you know,' the king of Kandy threatened them, 'that such as know not God, and do not keep their word, will one time or other, be sensible of the ill consequences thereof; I know I have God on my side.' But either the faith of the native prince was insufficient to expel the intruders, or heaven failed in his support, for the coastal districts of Ceylon in time became a recognised and profitable dependency of Holland.

The place was ruled by a Dutch governor resident at Colombo, under the supreme authority of the viceroy at Batavia;[1] but the Dutch control in Ceylon, albeit avowedly commercial in aim, seems to have been milder than in Java. An extensive trade was carried on in cinnamon and pearls; and the former was cultivated, as it had been from time immemorial in the island, by forced labour. But the Dutch East India Company, which elsewhere took little interest in the condition of its native subjects, adhered in Ceylon as far as possible to the ancient customs of the island, respecting the prejudices of the Sinhalís, and even upholding the rigid laws of caste.[2]

---

[1] An incident very rare among colonising nations occurred in 1729. A Dutch Governor of Ceylon, Petrus Voyst by name, attempted to set up his own authority, and declared himself an independent ruler. Punishment was quick and severe; he was arrested, conveyed to Batavia, broken alive on the wheel, his body quartered and burned, and his ashes thrown into the sea. I can recall no similar case in Dutch or British colonial annals.

[2] *Philalethes* remarks that 'the insensate avarice of the Dutch proved as unfavourable to the happinese of the people as the enthusiastic bigotry of the Portuguese.' The statement is scarcely borne out by the facts; it was published at a time when feeling against Holland ran high in England.

Some local churches and schools were established, and the merchants of Amsterdam for long nourished the visionary hope of converting the 'benighted native' to the 'true reformed religion.' Their measure of success seems to have been small, although they insisted that every Sinhalí employed by the Company should be a Christian—a regulation which can only have encouraged the spread of hypocrisy; but it is curious to read, among the despatches regulating the price of land and discussing the suppression of smuggling, of the regret of the great trading corporation at the 'increase in the number of Roman Catholics, and the pleasure it gave us to find the Governor Van Eck had taken measures effectually to prevent this.'

The English and Ceylon.

The earliest connection of the English with an island which they were eventually to conquer from the Dutch was inglorious; the second, a century later, was shameful; the third, some twenty years subsequently, was almost ludicrous.

One Ralph Fitch, or Fitz, who touched at Ceylon in 1589, was the first Englishman actually to visit the island; but no attempt was made to open up trade, and it was not until another ninety years had passed that the unfortunate adventures of Captain Knox roused some interest among the English people.

On 21st January 1657, the English East India Company's frigate *Ann* left England for Madras under Captain Robert Knox. After a successful trip to India the vessel turned homewards; but a terrible storm drove her onto the coast of Ceylon on 16th November 1659. The ship was dismasted and nearly wrecked, and the crew took refuge ashore. The sailors were shy of the strangers among whom they now found themselves, but they were welcomed with so much courtesy that their suspicions soon vanished. They were received in audience by the king; but that monarch, who seems to have been both capricious and abandoned,[1] suddenly imprisoned the castaways.

They made many attempts to escape, but all were frustrated; and not until Knox had endured a 'long and disconsolate captivity' of nearly twenty years did he succeed in getting away. Some personal liberty was not denied him; he had a few theological treatises with which to while away the monotonous hours; and an old man gave him a copy of an English Bible which the Portuguese chanced to have left behind them. The natives were kind, and pitied the victim of their king;[2] they advised him to marry one of their women, but Knox had no admiration for the ladies of Ceylon. The ungallant prisoner, in fact, remarked afterwards in his account of his adventures that there were no morals in the island except among the Sinhalí aristocracy.[3]

At length in 1679 Knox succeeded in escaping to Colombo; and the Dutch merchants of that city, to whom he made known his evil plight, generously helped him on his homeward way. 'We and the English,' they said, 'are not only neighbours, good friends, and allies, but also closely bound to each other by religion, and therefore the more bound to assist each other in need.' The temporary good fellowship and kindly feeling forms a pleasant but rare interlude to the incessant struggle between Dutch and English for mercantile dominion in the Eastern seas.

---

[1] Knox was an uncompromising Tory, for he remarks that the king of Kandy 'had a daughter that was with child by himself. . . . But this manner of incest is allowable in kings, if it be only to beget a right royal issue, which can only be gotten that way.' The divine right of kings!

[2] But some of the English attempted to domineer over the Sinhalís even in captivity—a fact which shows that their imprisonment must have been light. Possibly it was the original cause of their confinement.

[3] 'Youth are brought up to whoredom; indeed the public trade would be bad, and hardly maintain them that exercise it, the private one being so great. For the matter of being with child, they very exquisitely can prevent the same.' The yet more intimate revelations in which Knox indulges may perhaps be left unquoted.

The next appearance of the English in Ceylon was due to the sudden ambition of our traders in India. Britain and Holland were at peace in 1763; but the government of Madras, possibly desirous of emulating the conquests of Clive, sent an embassy to the kingdom of Kandy, and offered to help the native sovereign to drive the Dutch out of the island.

Nothing came of the disgraceful message; but the king had not forgotten it twenty years later, when, the Dutch having declared war against Britain in the Imperial Civil War, the British decided to wrest Ceylon from Holland. On 11th January 1782, the port of Trincomali on the eastern side of the island was taken by Sir Hector Munro, the Dutch making feeble resistance. But when a British embassy was sent to Kandy shortly afterwards, the native king remarked that the English were like all other nations, since they acted solely in their own interests, and thought nothing of those whom they wished to delude into being their allies.

The reproach was not unjust. But it was small comfort to the English, who failed in their mission, to learn that a few months afterwards, on 31st August of the same year, Trincomali was captured by the French, and the temporary British foothold on the island thus displaced.

Thirteen years afterwards began the final conquest of Ceylon. The Napoleonic wars had broken out, and the capture of the island had again been determined on by the British. On 1st August 1795, a force was landed at Trincomali, and after a siege of twenty-six days that fortress fell. Colombo capitulated without resistance, the Dutch garrison there being 'found in a state of the most infamous disorder and drunkenness, no discipline, no obedience, no spirit,'[1] and the administration of the maritime Dutch provinces of Ceylon passed quietly to the East India Company's government at Madras.

---

[1] Perceval's *Account of the Island of Ceylon*. The Dutch, however, alleged treachery on the part of the governor.

Six years later the place was transferred to the Imperial Government, but the English in the island were already immersed in the subtleties of native politics. The atmosphere of intrigue that is inseparable from the court of an oriental autocrat soon enveloped the British as it had the Portuguese and the Dutch before them, and neither their diplomatic nor their military strategy proved more successful at first than that of their predecessors. The British wished to establish the same kind of protectorate in Ceylon that they were extending over India, by maintaining the king in a position of titular dignity but real impotence. The chief minister at the court of Kandy, who aspired to mount the throne himself, treacherously lent them his aid. And the native Sinhalí monarch appears to have been wise enough to distrust both parties equally.

Intrigue and Unsuccessful War.

Intrigue gave place to war in 1802, but though the city of Kandy was captured, the British force that was stationed there was soon compelled to surrender. On the return to Colombo, the British troops were harassed by a guerrilla warfare, and they were informed that if they did not lay down their arms and return to Kandy as prisoners they would be put to death.

The position was extremely difficult. Ammunition was low; provisions had run short; the soldiers were worn out with sickness and a long march under a tropical sun. The fidelity of the auxiliaries was suspected, and the whole army was in an untenable situation, with a rapid, unfordable river ahead that was guarded by Sinhalís.

Major Davis, who was in command, surrendered; the troops returned to Kandy, and there the defenceless soldiers were slaughtered. Davis was kept a prisoner for years in the capital, where he seems to have been forced to adopt native dress, and where he must have reflected sorrowfully that it would have been better to have risked a hopeless fight than to have made a tame surrender. Only three men of his division reached Colombo alive—one Englishman, one Malay and one Lascar.

Thus ended in disaster the first British attempt to subdue the whole of Ceylon. A desultory but devastating war was now carried on. The Kandyans harassed the British provinces, and the British ravaged the territories of the Sinhalís. No quarter was given, for the Sinhalís realised that their opponents had the same schemes of conquest as every other European race. And the British considered, with some reason, that the massacre of their troops had put the natives beyond the pale of civilised warfare.

Desultory Strife.

The Kandyan houses and stores were plundered and burnt. The gardens were destroyed and the temples were outraged; and when in 1804 it was again resolved to attempt the reduction of the native kingdom, the British troops were specifically ordered to 'concert such measures as would best tend to effect the greatest destruction and injury.'[1]

Such measures of warfare added nothing to the honour of the British name, and they were open to the additional and more immediate objection that they were again unsuccessful. The same obstacles which had wrecked the previous expedition caused the failure of the second campaign. The roads were few and bad; the troops were sick, many of them died, the commander was attacked by dysentery, and 'obliged to be carried in a cloak fastened to a stick.'[2]

A decade of spasmodic warfare and insecure peace followed. But an attack on some native British subjects was the cause, or perhaps the pretext, of the third and final struggle in 1815.

The campaign was short and decisive. The king of Kandy was not supported by his subjects, probably in consequence of the tyranny he had exercised over them, and after a few weeks, on 18th February, he was captured with his four wives and his mother. 'Had my people behaved as they ought to have done,' said the defeated prince to his conquerors, 'I would have shown you whether I was a man or a woman. Twice during my reign have you obtained possession of Kandy, and twice have you been very glad to get out of it. . . . It is of no use to talk of the taste of food after it is in the belly.' The deposed monarch, who thus accepted his fate with philosophic resignation, was well treated, but the remainder of his life was spent in exile in India.

---

[1] Order of General Wemyss, dated 8th September 1804. Five days earlier the same officer had given instructions not to do 'any injury to the country or people unless opposed.' I cannot account for the sudden change.

[2] See *Narrative of the Operations . . . on an Expedition to Kandy in* 1804, by Captain Johnston (1810).

The Final Struggle.

On 2nd March 1815, the British flag was hoisted in Kandy, in the presence of an apparently indifferent populace, and Sinhalí independence, after maintaining itself for over two thousand years, was brought to a close. A revolt occurred in 1817, but was sternly suppressed; the houses of the rebels were fired, their cattle and grain carried off, and they were forced to take refuge on the tops of mountains or in the forests of the interior. At length, weary of hardship and famine, they surrendered, and two subsequent insurrections, in 1843 and 1848, were easily put down.

The Conquest Completed.

From that time the military history of Ceylon has been a blank: and British authority was soon so thoroughly established, that when the Indian Mutiny broke out in 1857, the Government was able to denude the island of all its available troops without danger, in order to relieve the hard-pressed European garrisons of the peninsula. And the traveller who visits Ceylon to-day without some knowledge of its past history would find it difficult to believe that the gentle, effeminate Sinhalís are the descendants of a race that once fought on equal terms with Europeans in the field, so completely have their military qualities been forgotten during a century of unbroken peace.

The Sinhalís had not hitherto found much cause either to believe the word of Europeans or to bless the coming of their alien masters. The religious bigotry of the Portuguese had made their rule that of mere bloodthirsty conquerors. The Dutch, with less crusading zeal, had likewise schemed to obtain the whole island. And the earlier record of British intervention in the affairs of Ceylon reveals a policy at once harsh, grasping, and untrustworthy. It is true that on the capitulation of Kandy in 1815, its new English rulers had guaranteed the civil and religious liberty of the natives; had agreed that Buddhism should be preserved, that all the sacred buildings should be protected, and that the established laws should be maintained with the recognised royal dues and revenues. Yet a Sinhalí who reflected on the past dealings of the English with the kings of Kandy, may well have doubted whether the agreement which a vanquished nation had no power to enforce would be faithfully observed by a European people whose acts had shown it to be neither more scrupulous nor less ambitious than its other occidental rivals in the Orient.

But the development of a new sense of responsibility towards subject peoples, which was noticeable as a leading element in the increasing dominance of Asia by Europe during the nineteenth century, quickly bore fruit in Ceylon. The compact between British and Sinhalís was faithfully observed in the spirit if not in the letter of the agreement, and the rich tropical island now experienced the benefits of a liberal and progressive administration which multiplied its wealth, vastly increased its natural resources, and endowed it with a permanent prosperity such as it had never previously known.

The final conquest of Kandy was achieved by methods that foreshadowed the new policy. The native roads in the interior were mere rough tracks through the jungle, and among these every previous European expedition had gone helplessly astray; but Sir Edward Barnes, the British

Governor, constructed a military route between Colombo and Kandy, which rendered the conquest and continued subjection of the Sinhalí kingdom a relatively easy matter.

Commerce followed in the footsteps of the soldiers. By 1832, a mail coach—the first of its kind in Asia—ran to Kandy, and in 1867 a railway was opened between the British and native capitals.[1]

The policy of material progress, thus successfully inaugurated, was continued without interruption from year to year. Roads were laid down in all parts of the island; towns and villages sprang up by their side, and gardens or large agricultural estates were planted in what had been the immemorial haunts of the wild beasts of the jungle.

The canals which the Dutch had dug were extended, and irrigation was introduced where water had been scarce; bridges were thrown over the swift streams of the hill country; the post office and the telegraph soon connected the most isolated station with the outer world. And, while the military expenses were easily lowered in an island that, by contrast with its bloody past, now seemed the abode of perpetual peace, the rapidly increasing revenue was devoted to education and the construction of public works.

European capital and energy flowed to so prosperous and fertile a country, and the native proverb: 'Better to walk than run, to sit than walk, and best of all to go to sleep,' was no longer applicable to a wealthy and industrious land.

A Century of Peace.

The change worked in less than a century is best shown by statistics. In 1796 a generous allowance had calculated the population of the island at rather under a million;[2] by 1887 it had trebled. The inhabitants of Colombo had increased from 28,000 to 120,000, and Colombo itself had developed into one of the great ports of call for ocean steamers.

---

[1] This line, which was of 5 ft. 6 in. gauge, possessed some engineering interest when it was constructed, owing to the fact that it had an up-gradient of 1 in 45 for twelve miles.

[2] In 1824 a census gave the population as 851,440; but it was known that many of the natives had hidden themselves through the fear of being taxed.

The revenue had risen from £226,000 to £1,300,000, the expenditure from £320,000 to £1,280,000, and whereas in the earlier years of the British occupation the Government had always been faced by a deficit, there was now almost invariably a surplus. Imports had grown from £266,790 to £4,700,000; exports from £206,583 to £3,700,000.[1] The 75,000 tons of shipping which had been registered when the British first occupied the island had risen to some four millions. The area of cultivated land had increased from 400,000 to 3,100,000 acres; the live stock from a quarter of a million to one and a half million; and in place of the old sand and gravel tracks of the Sinhalís, the British had constructed 1300 miles of metalled, and 900 miles of gravelled road. There were 181 miles of railroads and 1200 miles of telegraph wires; the four post offices had become 130; and while the schools had risen in number from 170 to 2200, the scholars in attendance had grown from 2000 to 120,000.

The natural resources which had rendered such material progress possible lay in the soil of Ceylon. The cultivation of cinnamon was nearly trebled, although the price in the markets of Europe had fallen considerably. The sugar-cane, it is true, had failed, owing to the climate—a matter of relatively small importance, since the increasing use of the sugar-beet had nearly destroyed the profits of the cane—and tobacco was not very extensively grown; but many a fortune was made from coffee, and when the coffee-shrub was attacked by disease, the inexhaustible soil proved equally favourable to the cultivation of tea. The increasing use of rubber throughout the world at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, induced many of the planters to transform their tea-gardens into rubber plantations, with considerable profit to themselves.

---

[1] The local customs valuation; the real value was much greater.

Plantation life is much the same all over the tropics. A white proprietor directs operations; a native or imported population, of slaves in the old days, of indentured or free labourers since the Emancipation Act, tends the crops; and the ancient divisions of race and colour are still strongly marked under the modern division of capital and labour.

Political and Social Experiments.

It has been said of New Zealand that it is the political laboratory of the white population of the British Empire. The adventurous colonists at the antipodes have tried administrative and legislative experiments from which their more conservative brethren at home would have shrunk; and if at times the mixture of unknown social chemicals has resulted in an unexpected minor explosion, the general results have been advantageous both to participants and onlookers. In like manner Ceylon can claim to be the political laboratory for the non-European races of the Empire; and experimental measures have been introduced in that self-contained island which could hardly have been ventured upon in the greater territories of India.

Many of these social and political experiments were indirectly the outcome of that enterprising policy of industrial development which in time made Ceylon the first and most important of the Crown Colonies. The forests were preserved and extended under the control of the state; new products were introduced and encouraged by grants-in-aid; an irrigation board was formed. But in spite of this expansion of industry, compulsory labour was abolished in 1818, except as regards the administration and repairing of roads and bridges; and the trade in cinnamon, which had been a monopoly worked by forced service for centuries, was thrown open to all.

The legal system of Ceylon underwent a radical change at the hands of the new rulers. Judicial torture was abolished by the first British governor of the island, and trial by jury was introduced in 1811. The old Roman-Dutch code was maintained until 1885, when a penal system, based on that of India, was instituted; but the original Dutch administration, of which the first governor said that 'no system could be imagined more directly hostile to property [or] to the industrial improvement and felicity of the people,'[1] was swept away at once. No distinction was recognised between European and native judges; a system of regular taxation was begun, instead of the older method of rendering personal service; and a free press was allowed and encouraged.

The old village communities were restored; and the powers of the village councils and tribunals were extended. Nor was this enough to satisfy the ardent reformers who were in charge of the administration. Municipalities were established on the European model, and municipal councils were instituted; these latter, however, were seldom successful, since the high-caste Sinhalí objected to canvass the man of low caste for his vote, while he discovered an equal objection to be ruled by his social inferior.[2]

The first Legislative Council of Ceylon had assembled in 1834; ten years later all caste and class distinctions were abolished by law, and slavery was finally done away with.

No legislative enactment, however, can abolish the ingrained traditions of centuries; and the simple fiat of its rulers did not suffice to change the people of Ceylon into an occidental democracy. But almost everywhere throughout the island the influence of the new education system introduced by the British was noticeable, and the English language was now commonly spoken, or at least understood, by the natives.[3] And the authority of Buddhism was gradually, although perhaps not very greatly, weakened in the sacred land of that religion; for some success attended the continuous work of the many Christian missionaries in Ceylon. At the close of the nineteenth century there were believed to be some 300,000 native converts to the creed of Christ; but despite the efforts of numerous Protestant preachers, the adherents of Catholicism far outnumbered those of the rival confession. It was calculated that the Sinhalí Catholics totalled 220,000.

---

[1] North's *Correspondence*, in Wellesley MSS.

[2] It must be conceded that the same difficulty in inducing men of good position to come forward for municipal elections was often experienced both in Britain and America.

[3] The Dutch language had long been dead in Ceylon; but the older Portuguese patois survived among the large Eurasian class, who were mainly descended from the Portuguese.

Yet, despite the utmost efforts of the Christian missionaries, the tooth of the sacred Buddha, which was preserved on a golden lotus flower mounted on a silver table at Kandy, still drew reverent crowds to its shrine; and despite all European education, the devil-dancer and the astrologer still maintained their hold over the people. Beneath the mantle of western civilisation and industry the heart of the East throbbed on unchanged.

CHAPTER VI

THE FAR EAST: 1596-1910[1]

WHILE Russia moved steadily forward to that outlet on the Pacific which was the ultimate goal of her expansion, other nations, likewise pressing onwards at the call of statesmen,

---

[1] Authorities.—There are notices of China in Hakluyt and Purchas; in the East India Company's Records, and the *Storia do Mogor*. Sargent's *Anglo-Chinese Commerce and Diplomacy* summarises the earlier treaties very clearly; it may be supplemented by Boulger's *History of China*. Macartney's embassy is described at length in Helen Robbins's *Our First Ambassador to China*. See also the *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, by Dickins and Lane-Poole; Bower's *Despatches*, and Loch's *Personal Narrative*; and Morse's *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*. Modern China may be studied in Colquhoun's *China in Transformation*; Hart's *These from the Land of Sinim*; and Angier's *Far East Revisited*, as well as in the occasional letters in the London *Times* from its Chinese correspondent, of quite exceptional merit.

For Hongkong, Eitel's *History* is the most complete record; it is unfortunately marred by several misprints and errors of chronology. The health of the colony is discussed in Berncastle's *Glance at Hongkong in 1850* (*Colonial Magazine*, vol. xxii.); Black's *Sanitary State of* adventurers, missionaries, or traders, reached out from Europe into the further Orient beyond India, where, as West approaches East, the spirit of the two hemispheres becomes yet more sharply contrasted.

The distant East had indeed for long been partially known to Europe. The Portuguese pioneers reached the great city of Canton in China by 1516; less than a generation later they appeared in Japan, and for years they were active traders and evangelists in both countries. The Dutch followed the Portuguese within a century; the British followed the Dutch.

But China and Japan were more reserved in their dealings with Europeans than India has been; and it was found impossible to enforce a compliant spirit on them. Neither monarchy was in course of disintegration, and the schemes of conquest which were brought to a successful issue in India by the western invaders when the Mughal Empire lost its power, were therefore impossible further east. The growth of foreign trade was jealously watched. Political influence could not be obtained, nor was it always sought, at least by the Dutch and British. And the spread of Christianity was prevented by the simple yet effectual measure of massacring the converts.

The Failure of the Jesuits.

At first, indeed, St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the East, had conceived great hopes. He described the Japanese as 'discreet, magnanimous, and lovers of virtue and letters,' and though he found that they 'utterly despised foreigners, yet the soil was disposed to receive the seed of heavenly doctrine, and there was the best right to expect a plentiful harvest of souls if only cultivation were not lacking.' Many converts were made by

---

Hongkong in 1865; and Clarke's *Report on Bubonic Plague in* 1898 *and* 1900 in the Sessional Papers.

For Wei-hai-wei, Bruce-Mitford's *Territory of Wei-hai-wei* and an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June 1899; also *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, by Johnstone. The other British settlements are adequately treated in *European Settlements in the Far East*, an able but anonymous work.

Xavier himself; and he was preparing joyfully for the religious conquest of China, when, in 1552, he died on an island off Canton, murmuring as he passed away the magnificent words of the *Te Deum*: 'In Te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum.'[1]

The hope of the great Jesuit was not fulfilled. China remained impenetrable to Christianity; and a deep revulsion of feeling took place in Japan. At Nagasaki in 1637 thousands of converts who refused to trample on the Cross were thrown from a high cliff; on an island in the harbour near by the village of Nogi some 37,000 were slain. The Portuguese were expelled; and the privilege of Japanese trade was confined until 1858 to the Dutch, who wisely restricted their energies to commerce, and left the natives to the peaceful exercise of their own religion.

Futile Attempt to open up Trade.

The first English attempt to open up trade with the Far East took place some years before the formation of the East India Company; and the letter which Elizabeth addressed to the Emperor of China, dated 16th July 1596, shows that the royal court was as much interested in the development of oriental trade as the merchants of the city of London.

The Emperor was requested that when any subjects of the Queen of England should 'come for traffique's sake into any of the stations, ports, places, towns, or cities of your empire, they may have full and free liberty of egress and regress, and of dealing in trade or merchandise with your subjects, and may by your highness' clemency most firmly enjoy all such freedoms, immunities, and privileges, as are usually granted to the subjects of other princes which exercise traffic in your dominions; and we on the other side will not only perform all the offices of a well-willing prince unto your highness, but also for the greater increase of mutual love and commerce between us and our subjects, by these present letters of ours do most willingly grant unto all and every your subjects, if it shall seem good unto your highness, full and entire liberty unto any of the parts of our dominions to resort, there to abide and traffic and thence to return.'

---

[1] See the letters of Xavier: to Loyola, 'beginning of January 1549'; to the Jesuits, 29th January 1552; to Don Pedro de Silva, 5th November 1549.

This sanguine epistle produced no result, for it failed to reach the Emperor, and the fate of its bearers remains unknown. Another two centuries were to elapse before the first British ambassador was admitted to the Court of Pekin; but the expectations and promises of Elizabeth's missive were curiously falsified by the course of subsequent events. It required a struggle of over three hundred years, and a series of skirmishes and wars, to induce the Chinese to open their doors to European trade; and when at length the Chinese themselves began to emigrate to the British dominions, instead of that full and entire liberty to come and go which Elizabeth had promised, they found the path blocked in almost every direction by popular distrust and legislative restrictions.[1]

The East India Company fare no better.

But the failure of Elizabeth's letter did not deter the directors of the East India Company from seeking to trade with China a few years later. Rumours of the wealth of the country had been circulated through Europe since the time when Marco Polo had published his travels three centuries previously; and those rumours had lost nothing from their necessarily vague character. And though the Venetian voyager's description of the enormous extent and riches of the cities of Eastern Asia had been ridiculed in his own lifetime, his account was easily believed by an age which had seen the discovery of a new world containing far more wonders than the most fertile imagination had ever pictured.

---

[1] See vols. v. and vi. for the restrictions on the Chinese in Australia and South Africa.

The East India Company, therefore, hoped to extend its business connection in Asia from the Malayan isles to the empires of the farther east; and two years after a station had been opened at Firando in Japan in 1612, negotiations were begun for direct trade with China. But nothing came of the project, and five years later, when both the English and Dutch East India Companies found it impossible to make any headway against the determined refusal of the Chinese to open their ports to trade, the two corporations united for a time in the common cause.

A station was to be opened in the Philippine Isles or elsewhere by the allies; a common council of defence was to be formed, and the Chinese were to be forced, not only to trade with the two nations, but to confine their trade to them. But the agreement was short lived. The English complained that the Dutch used the flag of their ally to cover marauding expeditions against the Chinese, and thus brought disgrace on our name; and it was said that after the English had loyally helped to fortify Pescadores, the Dutch drove them out, and appropriated the whole trade to themselves. Whatever the truth of the allegations may have been, the Amboyna outrage in 1623 effectually put a stop to all future cooperation between the two nations and companies in the East.[1]

The Beginning of Success.

Yet the English, far from abandoning the hope of Chinese trade, still made dogged attempts to force the door of oriental exclusiveness. Some measure of temporary success was at length achieved, when relations were opened with Canton in 1637, but the jealous Portuguese intervened from Macao, and a petty skirmish took place in which the Chinese fired on the English ships. Our sailors in revenge captured the native forts, and plundered the neighbouring town and vessels; but though their firmness secured the desired concessions, the renewed intrigues of the Portuguese again ousted the British. Fresh efforts elsewhere likewise failed at Chu-san, at Ning-po, at Lim-po, and at Amoy in 1675; and when eventually a Chinese Imperial Edict forbade all foreign commerce save with Canton, a city from which the English had been repeatedly repulsed, it seemed useless to persevere.

---

[1] See vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. iii.

The trade in China tea, however, had meanwhile become a source of increasing income to the East India Company, and the growing popularity of that beverage in England strengthened the determination of the directors not to abandon a profitable if difficult market. Tea was still a novel drink to Pepys in Restoration times;[1] but within a generation no lady of fashion would have faced the day without a luxury that use was rapidly converting into a necessary; and before the eighteenth century was far advanced the feminine tea-table was as much a national institution as the masculine coffee-house.

The First English Settlement.

The former trade was the monopoly of the East India Company. In 1676 their agents at Bantam, in Java, had been instructed to invest a hundred dollars annually in tea; and year by year the consignments grew larger. A trading station was established at Canton in 1684; and this first settlement of the English in China soon became a profitable centre for other goods besides the teas and silks which were its staple commodities. The traffic, indeed, was all from East to West; for though the Chinese were not unwilling to extract a profit from the foreigner, they had no intention of purchasing his manufactures in return.

'It will be a national advantage,' said the East India Company in 1710, 'if large quantities of English or any other European commodities would vend in China,' but the Chinese themselves would have none of it. And even the increasing European trade from port to port along the Chinese coast gave rise to suspicion. 'Smuggling,' wrote the viceroy of Canton, 'is a trifling affair, but having communication with foreigners is a thing which involves vast interests. It is indispensably necessary to strain every nerve to eradicate the first risings of baseness or mischief.' Seaborne trade between Chinese ports was now prohibited to Europeans; and restrictions were imposed on all foreigners, which, however galling in character, were suffered for the sake of the wealth which was amassed by them.

---

[1] I 'did send for a cup of tea (a China drink) of which I had never drank before.'—*Pepys's Diary.*

The life of the English traders in Canton, if financially profitable, had few other advantages. They were stationed in a squalid and filthy city where epidemics and plagues from time to time revenged the outraged laws of nature upon a teeming population. They received none of the honours which conquest had brought them at the courts of India; the highest consideration that the Chinese vouchsafed them was to refrain from insult. In a land where the lowest and most ignorant regarded them as barbarians, they were happy if they were not publicly degraded; and since they possessed neither social influence nor military strength, they could not protect themsleves against any ill-usage to which a capricious official or the whim of the mob chose to put them.

The Price of the Trade.

An independent English gentleman, who visited Canton before his adventurous fate revealed to him his future kingdom of Saráwak, has left an indignant account of the condition of his fellow-countrymen in China in the year 1830. 'Pent up in a miserable corner and restricted to an intercourse with a few ill-informed merchants,' wrote James Brooke, 'their means are more limited than their information. They receive daily insults from the ignorant and presumptuous barbarians. Resembling the Jews of old in England and the Greeks of the present day in Constantinople, they live in splendour and luxury in the interior of their establishments, but are treated like dogs and slaves when they stir out, and placarded like beasts at every corner of the town. The whole of our policy seems to have been in the meanest spirit of mercantile concession, for instead of looking on this growing and important trade as one of equal benefit to both parties, the maxim seems to have been to pick up any crumbs the Emperor may bestow, and bear kicks, insult, and degradation to any extent he may command. The supercargoes are men of liberal and enlightened minds, restless under their position, and well aware how calculated such a policy is in the long run to bring ruin and confusion on the Company's affairs. Concession has its limit and patience its bound, and sooner or later the Company must fight this battle, for the Chinese will drive them to the wall.'[1]

Two Embassies.

If the description was true, the reproach was not altogether just. Two attempts had in fact already been made, without success, to improve the condition of the English traders in China. With the consent of the British Government the East India Company had sent Lord Macartney, that cold but upright man, who, as Governor of Madras had set the example of administrative purity to a rapacious generation of Anglo-Indians, on an embassy to the Emperor of China at Pekin, in the year 1793. He carried with him a splendid retinue and magnificent presents for the ruler of the celestial monarchy; but though cordially welcomed on landing in China, it was not long before he discovered that obstacles were being placed in his way. 'Ever since our departure from Tien-tsin,' he wrote, 'I have entertained a suspicion from a variety of hints and circumstances, that the customs and policy of the Chinese would not allow us a very long residence among them. I observe a settled prejudice against the embassy, though often concealed under extravagant compliments and professions.'

The Chinese were determined to regard Macartney's presents as tributes; he was expected to perform the kotow—a ceremony which implied that he would prostrate himself before the Emperor; and when he was firm in his refusal to give more respect to the sovereign of China than to his own king, he found that the treatment of the embassy suffered. Finally, after being entertained for some months and receiving several fruitless audiences, every attempt to come to an agreement was frustrated; and strong hints were given that the visit should terminate.

---

[1] Letter quoted in Jacob's *Rájá of Saráwak*, 20th October 1830.

A second embassy in 1816 by Lord Amherst likewise failed, and it was now fully evident that the Chinese had no desire to enter into diplomatic or commercial relations with Europe. But the future troubles of the East India Company lay rather in England than in China. At Canton, indeed, it was faced by gradually increasing restrictions, and a series of petty annoyances and insults; but the profits were still considerable. In London, on the other hand, the agitation against its monopoly of the oriental traffic had come to a head; and though the directors protested that the price of tea would be raised were they deprived of their privileges, and that British commerce in China would suffer were it thrown open to independent competitors instead of remaining subject to the systematic policy of a single corporation, their complaints were overruled.

The Free Trade Policy.

Their monopoly was abolished by Parliament in the year 1834, and the China trade was declared freely open to any British merchant who chose to engage in it.

The immediate results of the change were unfortunate; but it only precipitated a trouble which must in any case have arisen eventually. The British traders refused to be bound by Chinese regulations, despite the instructions of their own government that they were to conform to the laws of the state with whose people they were dealing, 'so long as such laws should be administered with justice and good faith, and in the same manner in which the same are or shall be administered towards the subjects of China, or towards the subjects or citizens of other foreign nations.'

The Chinese, too, refused to recognise the authority of the three superintendents who were now to represent British interests in China, or even at first to approve the new policy at all. They threatened to stop the foreign trade altogether, although in a vainglorious edict they represented themselves as anxious to avoid that extreme measure, since Chinese goods were 'the sources by which the English people lived and maintained life. For the fault of one man must the livelihood of a whole nation be suddenly cut off?'

Such language roused the indignation of Lord Napier, one of the British superintendents, who now suggested that the British Government should insist on a treaty opening the whole coast to European trade, enforcing the demand by war if the concession were refused; and Captain Elliot, who succeeded him in sole control in 1836, was at once involved in similar difficulties.

It was already evident that the new policy had failed. But the British Government, by abolishing the monopoly of the East India Company, had placed itself in an extremely awkward position. It had been nothing to the Government when the Company was insulted by the Chinese authorities: a powerful trading corporation was fully capable of looking after its own interests; and it had, moreover, never appealed to the Government for aid or protection against the terms imposed by the officials at Canton. But now that Britain had officially declared the trade open to all her subjects, she was bound to safeguard their interests; and she could not overlook the studied disrespect shown to the officials whom she had appointed to that end.[1]

---

[1] But Napier admitted that 'many of the merchants of London, Liverpool and Glasgow care not one straw about the dignity of the Crown or the presence of a superintendent.'—Despatch, 17th August 1834. So long as their profits were safe, they thought little of vicarious insults.

Yet while the Chinese wished to prohibit all foreign trade, the British naturally desired to extend their dealings to every port from Canton to Korea; and they chafed under restrictions which they were compelled to obey—restrictions which included even such irritating interference as a refusal to allow European women to reside with their relatives at Canton.

Only two ways, however, were open: the foreigner must either impose his will by force, or he must acquiesce. And while the British Government was keenly sensitive to the indignity of the latter course, it had no desire to resort to the former.

The Opium Question.

The question was complicated by an illicit but extensive and extremely profitable trade which had gradually grown up between Britain and China in opium. That seductive drug, harmless, and perhaps even beneficial, if taken in small quantities as a medicinal stimulant, becomes a curse if indulged to excess. At first, indeed, its votaries are soothed by the narcotic, and delighted by the fancies which its fumes engender in the brain. But when use accustoms them to increase the dose of poppy-juice, its unhappy victims become slaves of the habit. They see visions and they dream dreams: their spirit is lost amid the shadows of an unreal world where wander phantoms terrible but dim; their body, filled with stupor and overcome with sloth, gives way to a listless paralysis, which deprives its prey of energy, volition, hope, or desire.

To this vice thousands of the Chinese had fallen victims for many generations; and there was some ground for the fear that the habit might undermine the stamina of an industrious race, so rapidly was the use of opium spreading. Imperial edicts had forbidden it in vain: though declared an article of contraband, it was grown in large quantities in China and imported from India under a well-understood system of smuggling and bribery. The latter trade was almost entirely in the hands of the British; and though the traffic was not one in which it was possible to feel any pride, it was a source of such considerable revenue to the British-Indian Government, always hard-pressed for funds, that it was certain not to be abandoned without a struggle. And the shippers, who supplied a commodity which the Chinese people demanded, might perhaps have urged without unfairness that some of the opposition which the Chinese Government now showed to a traffic so long permitted, albeit in a clandestine manner, was directed against the European merchant rather than against the drug in which he dealt. 'No man,' wrote Elliot to the British Cabinet in 1839, 'entertains a deeper detestation of the disgrace and sin of this forced traffic than I do. I see little to choose between it and piracy. But I could not sanction measures of general and undistinguishing violence against her majesty's officers and subjects.'

The objection of the Chinese Government to the opium traffic might be either moral or financial—for the import of opium caused the balance of trade to lie against China—or both:[1] the real problem at issue was that of allowing foreign commerce any standing at all in its dominions. In theory, it is true, no nation has the right to force its trade or its traders on another; any state can refuse to maintain relations, either diplomatic or commercial, with any other. If it possesses the right to open its ports freely to any flag, equally also it possesses the right to close them, either by the imposition of a tariff, or by an absolute prohibition. And it is a sound legal maxim in every state that the foreigner is bound, not by the laws of his own country, but by those of the country in which he chooses to reside.

---

[1] The British were convinced that the Chinese were insincere in their professions of a desire to put down the opium trade, and repeatedly stated that the real objection was to the fact that opium was imported instead of being grown in the country. Whatever may have been the case in the nineteenth century, the Chinese Government has certainly done its best to suppress the cultivation as well as the import of opium in the twentieth.

Against these two principles the British in China rebelled. They insisted on trading with the Chinese; they likewise determined not to submit to Chinese law. In theory they were wrong; but such matters are not, or at least have not been, decided by theory. In practice the stronger or more determined dictates to the weaker; and though the Emperor and officials of China laughed at the idea of the 'barbarian traders' of the West enforcing their will on the Celestial Empire, the wars of 1839 and 1860 speedily humbled the pride of oriental ignorance. Unfortunately these wars also humbled the pride of occidental morality; for the first war arose directly out of the praiseworthy determination of the Chinese Government to abolish the use of opium; the second war arose out of its refusal to recognise the consequences of its failure in the first.

If one nation can refuse to open its trade to another, however, it cannot continuously ill-treat the subjects of another state without protest or punishment; and the Chinese Government, emboldened by the apparent helplessness of the British, now proceeded to outrage its unwelcome alien guests. Early in the year 1839 the opium trade at Canton was suppressed by an energetic viceroy. On 25th March the foreign merchants resident in that city were compelled to give bonds not to deal in the drug or to introduce it into China in any way; twenty-four million dollars' worth of the commodity were seized and buried in quicklime; and the British traders, imprisoned in their factories and menaced by a turbulent mob, were for some days in a perilous position. At length they made their escape, first to the Portuguese settlement of Macao, and subsequently to the small island of Hongkong; and a cry for vengeance now went home to the British Government.

The viceroy of Canton was congratulated by the Emperor for suppressing the foreigners, and the viceroy himself believed that his energetic measures had been successful. 'I find that your sovereign has habitually shown a dutiful compliance,' he had said once to the British superintendent; 'she will assuredly yield obedience to the Celestial Court's prohibitions. How can you bring the laws of your nation with you to the Celestial Empire?'

The War of 1841.

But for the moment the question was one of war rather than of law. Eight years previously the Emperor had issued an edict that the forts and vessels of China should be ready 'to scour the seas and drive off any European war-vessels that might make their appearance on the coast'; and on 3rd November 1839, an encounter took place between Chinese and English ships off Canton. It was immediately followed, on 26th November, by an order excluding all the British from the city. And rewards were now offered for the destruction of their trade and the murder of such as remained in China.

Such outrages could not be overlooked, and early in 1840 a British naval squadron appeared before Canton. The Chinese were offered peace on condition of abstaining from further insults and injuries, and on payment of compensation for the property they had destroyed: but they could not yet stomach the idea of treating the foreigner as an equal. Long negotiations took place, which the viceroy purposely rendered fruitless; and at length, wearied of endless talk that had no result, the British determined to employ force. And the impotence of the Orientals was quickly shown in the battle of Chuen-pi on 7th January 1841. Within an hour and a half the Chinese lost eighteen war-junks; five hundred of their soldiers were killed and three hundred wounded, while the British loss was but thirty-eight wounded.

Hongkong, 1841.

The victory was effective for the time: the Chinese were compelled to submit to a treaty in which they ceded the island of Hongkong, agreed to pay an indemnity of twenty million dollars, open the trade of Canton, and recognise the principle of international equality.

The treaty was signed on 20th January 1841. Four days later a company of British officers landed on the spot since known as Possession Point, Hongkong, and drank to the health of the new dependency, the first and for many years the sole foothold of the English people in China.

The island of Hongkong, the most easterly of all British possessions, which was destined within seventy years to become the second port of the Empire, was the barren and desolate abode of a few thousand fishermen at the time of its occupation.[1] The merchants who had taken refuge there disliked the place, and many would have preferred a settlement in Formosa or Chu-san. But the quick eye of Napier had noticed Hongkong as 'admirably adapted for every purpose'[2] seven years before; and the future proved that no better selection could have been made.

At first, indeed, there seemed much justification for the complaints. Obnoxious vapours rose from the newly-turned soil, and malaria hung over the island as a constant pestilence. Cholera and smallpox were rampant everywhere: all classes of the community suffered heavily, but the garrison were especially subject to attack. Within twenty-one months two hundred and fifty-seven men died in one regiment alone, and the artillery lost fifty-one of its number of one hundred and thirty-five in two years. The treasurer of the colony strongly recommended its abandonment; and several of the merchants, whose business forced them to live there, detested a small island in which the only alternative to a cramped and isolated life, far from the comforts of Europe or India, seemed a premature and frequently painful death.

Hongkong[3] was, in fact, extraordinarily unhealthy in its early years ; but the settlers were in great part themselves to blame. The city of Victoria, the capital of the colony, had been built without any plan ; a large Chinese population was allowed to live promiscuously among the Europeans, and the filthy and insanitary habits of the Orientals were a constant breeding ground of disease. There was no sewage system in the Chinese houses : the homely virtues of drains and cleanliness were unknown to a people which prided itself on being the one civilised nation of the earth. The streets formed a stinking cesspool, which was only occasionally purified by a downpour of rain ; and the exhalations from the manure heaps of the natives pervaded and sickened the whole town.[1] The barracks were built on what was 'virtually an artificial marsh created by human hands' ; had a doctor been consulted in the choice of the site, said a medical official, much of the mortality among the soldiers might have been avoided.

---

[1] A census in May 1841 showed 5,650 Chinese inhabitants.

[2] Despatch to Palmerston, dated 14th August 1834. Napier died at Macao two months later on 11th October.

[3] The English spelling was changed from Hong-Kong to Hongkong shortly after the settlement was formed.

But the constant deaths in the colony at last drove the lesson home. Insanitary houses were pulled down, and rigorous restrictions were enforced ; the Chinese were separated from the Europeans, and a proper drainage system was instituted. As a result of these measures, Hongkong became as healthy as any other white settlement in the tropics, with a death-rate of but seventeen in the thousand, save when the fatal scourge of the bubonic plague broke out among the natives in 1894 and the subsequent years.[2]

Its unhealthiness, however, was not the only reason for the early unpopularity of Hongkong. Other dangers to life and limb lurked within and without the colony. Hordes of pirates surrounded the island, and the Chinese would give no aid in suppressing them. It was unsafe to put to sea in small vessels ; even large ships were sometimes attacked, and it was discovered that the pirates were occasionally aided by lawless and renegade European sailors. Hongkong itself was a refuge for all the criminals of Canton, attracted thither by the lighter laws and more comfortable prisons of an English community. Incendiarism was rife; highway robbers and burglars infested the streets, and no white man stirred abroad without a revolver, while private police were employed by every business house to protect its property. Trade, too, was disappointing: the authorities at Canton effectually discouraged dealings with the British; and a commercial mission to Annam, where French influence was now supreme, failed completely.

---

[1] The details in the medical reports are too nauseous to print.

[2] The mortality was over 90 per cent. of those attacked during this plague.

The situation indeed seemed hopeless. One of the governors of Hongkong likened the colony to a decayed Stilton cheese, and its surroundings to the back of a negro streaked with leprosy. A memorial of 1845 stated that the island 'had no trade at all, and was the mere place of residence of government and its officers, with a few British merchants, and a very scanty and poor population'; while a private resident two years later remarked that 'the whole of the British merchants would abandon it were it not for the very large sums sunk in business.' And in 1849 a local newspaper confessed that 'the colony was now in a state of insolvency; the public works were suspended, and the officials were only paid a portion of their salaries.'

Nor was Hongkong altogether happy under its administrators. Every governor in turn was virulently attacked in the local press. If he did nothing he was condemned for incompetence; if he acted, he was denounced as a tyrant or a bungler. The pettiness of the matters at issue exacerbated the tone of the disputants; and the governors of the island—among whom were Sir Hercules Robinson and other rulers not unequal to him in ability—seem generally to have been fully worthy of an ungrateful and turbulent community. But the troubles of the place, for which the residents themselves were at least partially responsible, were invariably visited on its governors, and few of the latter can have looked back with pleasure to the years they passed in Hongkong.

Public opinion in England at length grew disgusted with the continual disturbances; and on 15th March 1859, the London *Times*, then at the height of its great reputation, summed up the situation in a few scathing but true sentences. 'Hongkong,' said that journal, 'is always connected with some fatal pestilence, some doubtful war, or some discreditable internal squabble. The name of this noisy, bustling, quarrelsome, discontented little island may not inaptly be used as a synonym for a place not mentionable to ears polite. Every official's hand is against his neighbour. The governor has run away to seek health or quiet elsewhere. The newspaper proprietors were of late all more or less in prison or going to prison, or coming out of prison, on prosecutions by some one or more of the incriminated or incriminating classes. The heads of the mercantile houses hold themselves quite aloof from local disputes; but a section of the community deal in private slander which the newspapers retail in public abuse. A dictator is needed; we cannot always be investigating a storm in a teapot where each individual tea-leaf has its dignity and its grievance.'[1]

But within a few years a great improvement came. Hongkong had been declared a free port in 1841; and despite its early failure, trade gradually gravitated thither. The Chinese merchant is as honest as the Chinese official is rapacious; he soon discovered the advantage of an upright and liberal British administration. And the growing commercial importance of the Pacific Ocean added to the trade of Hongkong. Both Japan and Siam were in time opened to European trade. The discovery of gold in California now brought some advantage to the one white colony on the other side of the world; and after slavery was abolished in the British dominions overseas, when free negro labour was found unsatisfactory, the industrious and patient kuli was shipped from Hongkong to the plantations of the West Indies and Guiana, to the Malay Archipelago, and Australasia, and at a later period to South Africa. From each of these traffics Hongkong drew a profit; but the Government was forced to act sternly and quickly when it discovered that Chinese women were being shipped to San Francisco for immoral purposes, and that kuli labour at times approached near to the old slave regulations that had been abrogated. Success, however, in suppressing abuses of this character was not very marked.

---

[1] The wretchedness of the colony exercised the wit of the London music-halls at this time. 'You may go to Hongkong for me,' was the refrain of a popular song jeering at the miserable quarrels and remoteness of the place.

In other directions likewise the colony progressed. The civil service was reformed. A bold policy of public construction improved and beautified the island; and if the capital of Victoria could never hope to become the most magnificent city in eastern Asia, it could at least claim the not inferior merit of being the cleanest. The social life of the place grew somewhat less bitter; and although necessarily narrow, the useful distractions provided by the theatre, the regatta, and the races absorbed part of the superabundant energy which had previously been spent in abuse. And a valiant attempt was made to extirpate gambling and prostitution; but in neither instance was much good done. One cannot change the character of a people by an administrative order: the attempt to suppress the gambling-dens in which the Chinese quarters of the colony abounded merely resulted in the corruption by bribery of the police force; and the fact that Hongkong was a cosmopolitan seaport was sufficient to secure an unenviable reputation for the number and size of its brothels.[1]

---

[1] Most readers will remember the terrible vividness with which one of these establishments is described by Kipling in *From Sea to Sea*.

The prosperity of Hongkong, like that of Singapore, can never be altogether stable, since both depend exclusively on a transit trade with the rest of the world; and a pronounced check to the commerce of any country inevitably reacts on the two great centres of modern oriental traffic. Some fluctuations therefore are unavoidable; but the checks which the trade of Hongkong has experienced have been few and temporary. In 1901 the total population, exclusive of the naval and military establishments, was 283,905, of whom some six thousand only were Europeans; and the extensive trade of the colony may be judged by the fact that in 1905 no fewer than 25,764 vessels of 11,328,015 tons entered the port.[1]

The strategic weakness of Hongkong had been overlooked when its occupation for commercial purposes was decided on; but it was soon noticed that the place would be defenceless in case of attack. The defect was repaired at the first opportunity. The Kowloon Peninsula, whose heights command the island, was ceded to Britain in 1861; and in 1898 the district known as the New Territory was leased for ninety-nine years. From that time Hongkong was thoroughly fortified, and equipped as a military station, as well as being a naval base for the British fleet in Chinese waters; it was therefore reasonably safe against any Asiatic enemy.

The Treaty of Nan-kin, 1842.

If the cession of Hongkong was the most important result of the first British victory in the Anglo-Chinese War of 1841, other advantages followed when our troops continued the campaign in the same year. No other European army had ever marched through China; and the people, temporarily disillusioned at length from the pleasing but unfounded belief in their own superiority, watched helplessly as city after city fell before the conquerors.

---

[1] It may be worth noticing that although the opening of the Suez Canal did not diminish the trade of Hongkong, it changed its character in one respect. Before that time, the Chinese price of the goods exported from China was taken as the basis of their price in Britain; after that time the price was made in London.

Native superstition aided the advance of the western soldiers: an eclipse of the sun was interpreted as the presage of national disaster, while the British marched steadily upon Nan-kin; and in despair, the Chinese concluded the treaty named after that place on 29th August 1842.

It was now agreed that peace and friendship should reign between East and West; that Hongkong should be ceded; that an opium indemnity of 6,000,000 dollars, a war indemnity of 12,000,000 dollars, and the Chinese merchants' debts to the amount of 3,000,000 dollars, should be paid; that there should be fixed terms of equality between the two nations; and that five ports—Canton, Amoy, Fu-Chu, Ning-Po, and Shanghai—should be opened to British merchants. The latter were to submit, not to the Chinese Government, but to the jurisdiction of British consuls. The conquerors appeared to have obtained the rewards of victory; but the conflict was branded in England with the reproachful name of the Opium War.

The Second Chinese War, 1857-60.

But the old troubles revived immediately the victorious army was withdrawn. Hongkong indeed was already a British possession, and could not be retaken by the Chinese; but every means was tried to hamper its progress; and grave complaints were made by the English traders that the other ports named in the treaty were still closed to foreign commerce. Representations and protests to the officials of the Empire were ineffectual; and in 1856, the seizure by the Chinese of a vessel named the lorcha[1] *Arrow* brought on the second Anglo-Chinese War. The specific cause of the conflict was little more than a pretext which produced angry parliamentary debates and a general election at home; the real cause of the war was the arrogant exclusiveness of the Chinese and their refusal to observe the terms of the treaty of 1842.

---

[1] Lorcha is a Portuguese expression, borrowed from Macao, for a small clipper-built vessel.

The British troops destined for China, however, were diverted to India on the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857; and more than a year elapsed before the second British army landed on Chinese soil. In the meantime the old policy of insulting and humiliating the foreigners had been continued without abatement. British traders were stoned in the streets of Canton. The viceroy of that city offered a reward for every English head. Incessant native disturbances were fomented in Hongkong; incendiarism and robbery revived, and an attempt was made to poison the whole English population of the colony by putting arsenic in the bread.[1] But the campaign of 1857, in which French troops co-operated with the British—for the Chinese had not confined their hatred of Europeans to any one nation—although not conducted with any great military ability, quickly resulted in the capture of Canton and the arrest of the viceroy, who was seized while escaping over a wall by a British seaman 'twisting the august tail of the imperial commissioner round his fist.' The troops pressed on, and a treaty was negotiated at Tien-tsin on 26th June 1858, which was again repudiated by the Chinese as soon as the European forces were withdrawn.

Two years later the war was renewed, and this time a decisive campaign was fought. On 13th October 1860 Pekin was taken; a few days later the summer palace of the Emperor was burnt, and a convention signed on 24th October at last secured the observance of the Tien-tsin treaty.

But except for the small acquisition already mentioned at Kowloon near Hongkong, the British gained no territorial dominion in China as the result of the war of 1860. The other scattered settlements which the English people founded in far eastern lands were commercial and not territorial; and as such they were less permanent and important, while their petty annals are often fragmentary and elusive. They began indeed in the same manner as the English establishments in India. But whereas these latter had become an empire against the wish of those responsible for their foundation, the British colonies in and around China remained nothing but trading stations.

---

[1] The men arrested for this crime were acquitted by a jury for lack of evidence; but the outrage, which was unanimously attributed to the Chinese, was never satisfactorily explained.

The British in Formosa.

A typical instance of a commercial establishment that might in certain circumstances have developed into a Crown Colony or protectorate was furnished by the station opened in 1625 by the East India Company at Formosa, that splendid but savage island which the Portuguese named the beautiful. It flourished for a time; but when the Chinese restricted the privileges of foreign commerce in later years, the English settlement there languished and died out. Yet its memory survived, and the merchants who were the pioneers of Hongkong often looked with longing to the richer and more lovely island. And in 1858, when the trade of Formosa was again thrown open, British tea-traders at once established themselves in the northern districts of the place. That traffic continues profitable to this day; but in the south, where the camphor and sugar-fields attracted other Englishmen to start plantations, their settlement did not long survive the capture of Formosa by the Japanese in 1895. Camphor was declared a state monopoly by the conquerors, and its growth by private settlers proclaimed illegal; but no compensation was given for the estates that were confiscated, and the unfortunate proprietors were loud in their complaints against the dubious honesty of the Japanese Government and the indifference of the British to their grievances.[1]

The remaining British settlements on the Chinese mainland offer little worthy of notice. They were profitable centres of trade, and Shanghai in particular became practically a

---

[1] Davidson's *Formosa Past and Present* is a full and interesting account of the island.

European city; but they were colonies only in the narrowest sense of the word, small associations of traders living in a foreign country, and doing their business with certain rights or under certain restrictions, in a manner not very different from that of the Hansa merchants of the Middle Ages.

Port Hamilton, 1885.

The charts of Korea contain many English names, such as Mount Auckland and the islets of Eden, Barlow, and Beaufort; but these originate, not from any British settlements in those places, but from marine surveys carried out by the British navy. One rocky island, indeed, to the south of Korea, was for a brief time occupied by the British; Port Hamilton was secured in May 1885, being intended for a naval station in the event of Russia seizing any of the ports in Korea itself. But on an assurance being given from Petersburg that no such acquisition was in view, the place was abandoned in January 1887.[1]

Wei-hai-wei, 1898.

The withdrawal was regretted a few years later, when Russia took possession of Port Arthur; and the British Government, seeing its interests in the Far East seriously menaced by the growing preponderance of a rival European power, decided to establish another station in Northern China. The harbour of Wei-hai-wei, a hundred miles from Port Arthur, was hurriedly determined on; and the place was occupied on 24th May 1898. The cession was unpopular among the Chinese of the district, and some rioting took place in 1900; but a native regiment had been raised and drilled in the meantime, and the outbreaks were easily suppressed.

The whole territory, some 285 miles square, with an additional sphere of British influence of some 1500 miles, was administered at first by naval and military commissioners, and later by civilians, from Port Edward, as the small British settlement was named; the neighbouring Chinese city of

---

[1] See Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, vol. ii.

Wei-hai-wei, described as 'a miserable, decaying, sixth-rate town,' remained under native jurisdiction.

But the hope that Wei-hai-wei would become an important naval and commercial centre has not been fulfilled. It could be made, said a writer who knew the place well, 'a paradise, a sanatorium, or a fortified harbour; it could not be held as a secondary naval base in time of war.' The climate indeed is perfect, and Wei-hai-wei is used as a health resort; but it would be hard to define its other advantages.

The small garrison of Chinese infantry was reduced in 1902, and abolished in 1906; since then the place has been practically defenceless. The harbour has been dredged, but little shipping frequents a port that is not on any great commercial route; and trade cannot increase, since the British have unwisely agreed not to construct railways into the interior. The surrounding district, however, is fertile; and apart from agriculture, some minerals have been found, while the inevitable discovery of a gold mine has been proclaimed.

It had been agreed to evacuate Wei-hai-wei in the event of Russia giving up Port Arthur; but when the rival power ceded that stronghold to Japan in 1905, Britain decided to retain her one possession on the mainland. But the place continues of small importance; it is neglected by the Imperial Government, and the uncertainty of its future effectually stops private enterprise. Wei-hai-wei claims some interest as the one British possession beyond India in Asia which is not in the tropics; its actual value, as Lord Rosebery remarked in 1906, is at present not greater than that of a second-rate seaside resort.

Book XVI

VICTORIAN BRITAIN: 1832-99

CHAPTER I

THE WORKSHOP OF THE WORLD

The Supremacy of Britain.

The fall of Napoleon in the summer of 1815 had secured to Britain the peace which her people had long desired. Her fleets and armies could now repose after a generation of successful war. The nightmare of a sudden invasion, that had hung heavily over the country during the last twenty years, was at length dispelled. The supremacy of England on the high seas was perforce acknowledged. Her supremacy in Europe, as the one western nation which had not fallen beneath the power of France, could not be denied. Her supremacy in the outer world, as the one European nation which had maintained and largely extended her possessions, was admitted everywhere.

Very many years of long and prosperous peace lay before the people of the island that had become the leading political power of the globe. No international questions of importance faced Britain, or seemed likely to face her, now that the military dictator of Europe was safely banished to St. Helena. No new rival to Britain seemed likely to appear, or did in fact appear, until near the close of the nineteenth century, to threaten her supremacy. The Continent was profoundly quiet after the long tempest of strife. And

England was free to develop her people, her institutions, her empire and her industries as she would. Such are the legitimate fruits of successful war.

Fifty years earlier, when the Treaty of Paris was concluded in 1763, much the same opportunities had presented themselves to the English people. But in two decades of peace they had lost the empire which it had taken two centuries of war to create. They had since built up another empire during a whole generation of bloodshed. The renewal of peace would show whether they had learnt the lessons of their mistakes in the past.

To many who had known nothing but war, and to those whose political creed was little more than the evanescent effervescings of benevolence, a new heaven and a new earth seemed suddenly to have dawned with the conclusion of peace. Idealists like Shelley, who had looked upon their earlier years as ‘ graves, from which a glorious phantom might burst to illumine our tempestuous day,’ found in the hopes that sprang from peace the near fulfilment of their vision. Others more practical applied themselves to those long overdue reforms whose execution had necessarily been postponed during the terrible struggle with France. A spirit of deep unrest agitated the people ; and while industry was still seriously disorganised, while food was almost at famine prices, and distress was acute in many parts of the country, the expectation of fundamental changes in the social and political organisation of the nation gave added weight to the hopes or fears with which men contemplated the coming of a new age.

It is not for the annalist of the outer empire to describe the changes which affected the heart of that vast organisation during the nineteenth century. That task must be left to abler hands ; here it will be sufficient if, while passing over in silence many of the great movements which stirred the English people at this period to thought and its necessary correlative of action, we summarise briefly the national outlook on imperial and foreign affairs, and meanwhile glance hastily at a few of the divergent tendencies that went to the making of Victorian Britain.

Political Democracy and Social Stability.

If it is asked what were the leading characteristics of this period of our history, the answer is simple. In the political life of the nation we notice that the shifting of the centre of gravity from the aristocracy to the general body of the people, which began with the parliamentary Reform Bill of 1832, continued unabated through the whole Victorian age until England became, at least in name, a democracy. In the social life of the community, however, the same process, although noticeable in a certain degree, was far less marked; and the very visible respect which was still paid to titular and hereditary rank by the bulk of the middle and lower classes did much to modify and lessen the effect of the political change.

Both the social stability and the political reform of the nation were likewise influenced in opposite directions by the extraordinarily rapid industrial development of Britain. The congregation of the thousands of artisans and mechanics, and the numerous other wage-earning members of an industrial society, in the confined spaces of a great city, rendered their political organisation a simple process; and such an organisation was necessarily established on a frankly democratic basis.

On the other hand, society gained both in stability and in fluidity through the industrial changes. In older days, a man had seldom quitted the class in which he was born: the squire's son succeeded the squire, the farmer's son the farmer, the labourer's son the labourer. But the new urban industries offered greater chances to the ambitious. The clever workman often became the foreman or manager of a mill or mine; the exceptional workman, who united thrift to ability, sometimes founded his own factory and rose to great wealth. Such prizes, proportionately few, were numerically many; and several of the newer county families could count their first step upwards in the social scale from the day when the earliest ancestor whom they choose to remember ceased to be an employee and became a small employer. And the ease with which the factory owner or the merchant who prospered in business became an independent landed gentleman or, in rarer cases, obtained a patent of nobility, minimised any resentment which the well-to-do middle classes might have felt at the respect paid to their social superiors.

If the steady upward movement and the aspirations of many excellent and successful citizens have added the word snob to our language and the species itself to our national ethology, there is at least some compensation in the fact that the profound change from a territorial aristocracy to an industrial democracy as the decisive factor in the State was effected without any violent break in the social order. The Continent of Europe was involved in two severe and in several minor or local revolutions during the Victorian age. Britain alone stood firm, jealously conserving many of the old traditions while building up the new order, dovetailing carefully the tried institutions of the past with the experiments of the present, the while a few thinkers held forth as beacon-lights before the people the vaguer ideals of the future.

The Industrial Revolution.

But the master-key to the history of the period is neither social nor political, but economic. The whole face of Britain was being transformed under the pressure of the new industry; and it was primarily owing to that transformation that social and political changes became inevitable. But these latter were the consequences, not the causes; the by-products, not the essential.

In earlier ages there had been a slow evolution from forest, fen, and moor to farm and cultivated estate, as agriculture and stock-breeding spread over the country. Small market towns had grown up, whose importance varied with the size of the population they served and the wealth of the surrounding district; they were rarely further apart than twenty miles—about a day's journey there and back for a horse and cart from an outlying farm.

Life both in the country and the country town was quiet and tedious, with little difference from year to year; few save the great landowners were wealthy according to modern notions, and even their wealth was often sunk in unrealisable estates. Many of the old-established families led a comfortable, easy, and useful existence; the labourers, however, were poor and uneducated, with low wages and little chance of bettering their condition. Their clipped and narrow lives and stagnant, sordid interests have been described with sombre truth and insight by the poet Crabbe.

Urban Concentration.

It is therefore not surprising that, when the new processes of manufacture which were discovered in the latter half of the eighteenth century created a demand for labour that should be centralised in a town instead of being scattered over several farms across a county, the country people willingly responded to the demand by removing their homes from the isolated cottages in which their ancestors had lived to the crowded urban districts which now began to appear. They obtained thereby higher wages, more apparent freedom, greater opportunities of social intercourse, and some chance of wealth and independence; the frequent loss of individual health and the general degeneration of physique which eventually resulted was less evident at the time.

Year by year the emigration from country to town continued;[1] indeed, it continued into the next century, with perhaps abating force and with some slight tendency to an opposite movement as certain industries became decentralised. In 1800 the population of England had been mainly rural. By 1851 the people were almost equally divided between the towns and the country. And at the close of the Victorian age, half a century later, not less than 77 per cent. of the population was classified as urban.

---

[1] Mrs. Gaskell in *Mary Barton* makes one of her characters describe the emigration of a single family. 'There was more mouths at home

Many hated and some feared the transformation coming over England and in a less degree over Scotland, as fields were covered with factories, and streets of little self-contained houses displaced the farms and changed the ancient hamlet into a busy town. Yet the power and wealth of the country grew visibly year by year; and the cost of the change was not demanded of the pioneers of the new industry, but of their posterity.

New Means of Communication.

The new manufacturing interests were hampered for a time by the lack of means of communication and the still rudimentary methods of transit, and by a fiscal system which favoured agriculture at the expense of the increasing urban population. The heavy cost which attached to the transport of goods, whether manufactured articles for export or food-stuffs for import, seriously reduced the profits of the employers and the purchasing capacities of their employees; but in this respect

than could be fed. Tom had come to Manchester, and sent word what terrible lots of work was to be had, both for lads and lasses. So father sent George first, and then work was scarce out towards Burton, where we lived, and father said I maun try and get a place. And George wrote as how wages were far higher in Manchester than Milnthorpe or Lancaster; and I was young and thoughtless, and thought it was a fine thing to go so far from home. So one day th' butcher he brings us a letter from George, to say he 'd heard on a place—and I was all agog to go, and father was pleased like; but mother said little, and that little was very quiet. I 've often thought she was a bit hurt to see me so ready to go—God forgive me! But she packed up my clothes, and some o' the better end of her own as would fit me. . . . She did not cry, though the tears was often in her eyes; and I seen her looking after me down the lane as long as I were in sight, with her hand shading her eyes—and that were the last look I ever had on her.' The imaginary incident was typical of the break-up of many an old country home.

matters rapidly improved during the first decades of the period.

The extension of the canal system which had been begun in the previous century cheapened the carriage of goods; the new railway system made transport quicker, safer, and in the long run still more economical. The invention of the steamship also reduced the expense, while it increased the speed and the certainty, of ocean freight; the introduction of improved machinery likewise lessened the cost of production at home.

All these factors, whose operation had begun during the period between the fall of Napoleon in 1815 and the accession of Victoria in 1837, increased the power of the mercantile classes; and fourteen years after the Reform Bill of 1832 had given them a much greater weight in the government of the country, an unequivocal sign proved that political influence was passing out of the hands of the older territorial interest into those of the manufacturers.

Free Trade.

The tariff on imported corn, which had been imposed to protect the British agriculturist against foreign competition, was reduced in 1846 and subsequently abolished; many other protective duties were likewise soon reduced or abolished; and within a few years Britain had abandoned her old fiscal system for a policy of free trade, or more accurately of free imports. The change was strongly advocated by the manufacturers, and bitterly opposed by the agriculturists; but the manufacturers prevailed. And their victory was a sign that the economic future of Britain was mainly that of a manufacturing and commercial, rather than an agricultural state. A generation after free trade had become the fiscal policy of Britain, farming had ceased to be her leading industry; but in the meantime the country had become, in the words of a phrase popular at the time, ‘the workshop of the world.’

The traders of the country sought and seized the opportunities of commercial expansion with a splendid energy which made Britain for a time the industrial mistress of the globe, which made London the centre of the world's finance, and which covered the northern counties of England and the Scottish lowlands with a network of railways and a web of manufacturing towns. And the success with which they pursued the road to wealth reacted upon and deepened the dauntless optimism with which they regarded the social, political, and spiritual problems that confronted the nation.

It is this optimism, this confident assumption of ability to solve any question, whether of science, theology, or government, which forces itself upon the student of the Victorian age as the most prominent and indeed the typical mental attitude of the time. The attitude was partly no doubt inherent in the nation; but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the triumph of England in the Napoleonic wars, great as was the cost in life and capital, had much to do with the bracing, if to foreigners often gratuitously though unconsciously offensive, assumption of superiority.

In every department of life we find the great English Victorians calmly adopting, as of predestined right, the magisterial chair, and judging the rest of the world, as from a self-constituted court of final and universal appeal, by their own scales of right and wrong. Palmerston became a national hero because he interfered with every continental Chancellery and dictated a policy to the smaller European states. Gladstone, wide as the poles apart from Palmerston in thought, nevertheless followed essentially the same course when he wished England to become the 'moral leader' of Europe by intervening in the Balkans, and stopping the misgovernment of the 'unspeakable Turk.' The nation accepted his view, as it had that of Palmerston, with acclamation: it had no hesitation in subscribing to the comfortable doctrine of British supremacy, no difficulty in laying the flattering unction to its soul that its solution must be correct, since it was of British origin. A whole body of English philosophers in like manner believed they had discovered the ultimate foundations of civilisation in the law of supply and demand and the theory of *laisser-faire*; while many of their pupils taught that the combination of complete political liberty[1] with individual and universal commercial competition, the freedom and indefinite expansion of trade, and the spread of education and of the gospel of comfort, would cause war and revolutions to cease, and an era of permanent peace to be inaugurated upon the earth.

Apart from the not unimportant fact that the incalculable strivings and ambitions of human nature were omitted from the philosophic equation, the doctrine was in several respects neither ignoble nor unsound. In many of the achievements of the Victorian age its aspirations were fulfilled, and its optimism was justified; yet those whose easy faith led them, nothing doubting, along the new paths, did not and could not foretell the correlative drawbacks to the very advantages they hailed. The ghosts of many a dead ideal flit sorrowfully across the pages of nineteenth-century history; but disillusionment, if it can properly be so called, came somewhat later.

The Price of Industrial Dominance.

Slowly it became evident that the problems which mankind had to solve, or to perish in the attempt, cut altogether deeper than had been realised, and that many of the new theories must be revised and unexpected misconceptions sloughed. Commerce did not bind the whole world in links of amity; at times it led to disputes as embittered as the political or religious quarrels of earlier epochs. The new democracies were frequently rivals instead of friends. The people sometimes loved reaction better than progress, stagnation better than the uncertain effects of new ideas. The printing press was not invariably an instrument of enlightenment. Uncontrolled liberty was not necessarily good; discipline and governmental control and the organisation of a nation by its rulers were not necessarily bad. The practice of untrammelled competition occasionally resulted in the creation of the very monopolies which the advocates of free and open trade condemned; while it often crushed the workman and enriched the master at his expense. And individualism, when pushed to its furthest limits, became simply a gospel of selfishness; as such, in fact, it was defended by the historian Buckle, who believed that individual selfishness offered the best hope of national progress. But the doctrine was too harsh for general acceptance; and several finer and more altruistic spirits, among whom Denison Maurice stood conspicuously to the fore, revolted from the conception.

---

[1] There is an extraordinary proposition in one of Macaulay's *Essays*, that the only cure for the excesses of liberty is more liberty. He might with as much or as little justice have applied the axiom to the excesses of autocracy—or drunkenness.

The conditions of national life should tend to the development of individual character; but the conditions of the new industrial life, on which so much of modern national life was built, invariably tended to its repression, so far as concerned the average workman and his work. The individualism that was necessary for handwork inevitably died out before the advance of the machine; yet for nine-tenths of the work of the world, the machine was cheaper and more efficient than the handicraftsman.[1]

There were other very real disadvantages in the new industrial development. The great cities which now grew up wherever commercial enterprise found a profitable centre disfigured the fair breasts of our mother England with ugliness and squalor, and often infected her social life with the canker of moral evil. A heavy price was ultimately paid for the temporary domination of the world's markets: physical deterioration and intellectual stagnation[1] were stated by competent and independent observers in the following age to be the mark of large numbers of the town population.

---

[1] 'The perfection of machinery, which is used everywhere in England, and has taken over so many human functions, is for me not a little disquieting; this clever driving of wheels, and rods, and cylinders, and a thousand different sorts of little loops and pegs and teeth, which move almost with passion, fill me with horror. The certainty, the exactness, the great madness, and the punctiliousness of life in England made me not a little unhappy; for just as the machines in England appear like human beings, so do the human beings appear like machines.'—Heine.

A friendly German critic maintained that the whole of England was sickly and degenerate at the beginning of the twentieth century;[2] unfriendly critics of the same nation prophesied with joy the speedy downfall of the British Empire, in consequence of the declining stamina of its people.[3] A patriotic Canadian confessed himself appalled by the sights which forced themselves upon his eyes. 'Frankly, the thing that impressed me most (in England), the thing that stood out as the background of every reminiscence,' wrote J. A. Macdonald, 'was the bloodless, mirthless, hopeless face of the common crowd. Nothing seems able to dim or wipe out or soften the hard lines of that impression. The dress receptions, the gorgeous pageants, the galleries, the colleges, the storied castles, and all that rare procession of beauty and wonder and worth may fade into a dream-like memory, but the pale and sunken faces of the nameless city crowd haunt one like a weird. . . . The hollow-eyed procession of the homeless of London, the human sediment that littered the doorways and lanes of Portsmouth, the utter blankness of the faces in Sheffield; stooped shoulders, hollow chests, ash-coloured faces, lightless eyes, and, ghastliest of all, loose-set mouths, with bloodless gums, and only here and there a useful tooth. . . . It was hell!'[4]

---

[1] 'Our English race is comparatively and generally unintellectual.' —Bishop Gore.

[2] *Das Kranke England*, von Dr. Curt Abel-Musgrave, 1909.

[3] See, for instance, *After the Storm; Reflections on the Decline of the British Empire.* A summary appeared in the London *Standard* on 21st October 1908. Many similar productions were issued from the German press about the same time.

[4] The Toronto *Globe*, quoted by London *Daily News*, 20th October 1909. And Richard Seddon, who revisited Lancashire after many years spent in New Zealand, was shocked to observe the physical deterioration of the urban population.

Nor were these criticisms the mere reckless pronouncements of superficial spectators. The admissions of British statesmen and physicians, the reports of local municipal authorities, and the investigations of scientific sociologists, substantially confirmed the views of outside observers. 'About 30 per cent. of our population is underfed, on the verge of hunger; 30 per cent. of forty-one millions, something over twelve million persons,' stated Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman at Perth on 5th June 1903; the figure had only been arrived at after prolonged and careful investigation.

Pauperism, it is true, had largely diminished, but sweated labour was a constant factor of many trades; inadequately paid labour of many more. Women competed with men in the wage market, and children with both, for remuneration which often rendered decency, to say nothing of comfort, impossible.

Thousands of the people lived in slums. Thousands more could hardly afford to pay for the cellar or attic which sheltered them; whole families, to the number of more than half a million of the total population, were crowded together in one-room tenements.[1]

The steady physical deterioration of large masses of the nation was inevitable under such appalling conditions. Infantile mortality was enormous, reaching the terrible figure of 174 per thousand yearly in Dundee, exceeding it in some of the Lancashire manufacturing towns, and averaging 147 per thousand annually throughout England and Wales between 1896 and 1905.[2]

The more weakly died; the less weakly lived and grew into the stunted men and women whose hopeless faces and shrunken, sickly bodies haunted Macdonald and other visitors to Britain. A medical report on the children of Barnsley shows how far the process of degeneration had gone in 1909. Nearly 4000 of the scholars in that town were then examined; and of that number 86 per cent. were found to have decayed teeth, 58 per cent. to be suffering from diseases of the nose or throat; nearly one-third had defective eye-sight; 243 had ear-disease, and 419 defective hearing; in 186 cases the heart was defective, and 182 were afflicted with pulmonary tuberculosis. Another 440 were classed as mentally backward, feeble, or imbecile.[1] And a general medical report on the 6,000,000 children in the public elementary schools of England and Wales stated that 10 per cent. suffered from serious defects of vision, from 3 to 5 per cent. from defective hearing, 1 to 3 per cent. had suppurating ears, 8 per cent. had adenoids or enlarged tonsils, 20 to 40 per cent. suffered from extensive and injurious decay of the teeth, 40 per cent. had unclean heads, about 1 per cent. had ringworm, 1 per cent. were affected with tuberculosis of readily recognisable form, and ½ to 2 per cent. with heart disease.[2] Many of these defects and much of this suffering could have been avoided had the mothers of these children been given some elementary instruction as to the proper diet and upbringing of their children; but no such instruction was given.

---

[1] *Report on Public Health and Social Conditions*, 1909.

[2] *Report on Public Health*, 1909; and *Dundee Social Union Report*, 1909.

The habitual criminal roamed the streets of every large town.[3] The unemployed workman, the beggar, the homeless wanderer, and the filthy, verminous tramp, added to the human wreckage, and became a nuisance or a menace to the civilisation on which they preyed;[4] the able-bodied vagabond, who shouted for 'the right to work,' and shirked work when it was offered him, often threatened and sometimes disturbed the public peace.[1] This restless flotsam, washed to and fro by the sea of untoward circumstance against the solid rocks on which the national prosperity was built, easily defied the devoted attempts of philanthropists to rescue it; and there were very many more who lived continuously on the verge of the abyss, where one false step in the struggle for existence precipitated them headlong to the bottom.

---

[1] London *Truth*, 13th October 1909.

[2] London *Westminster Gazette*, 30th November 1910.

[3] A typical instance of the habitual and irreclaimable criminal was furnished by the case of one John Dockings, sentenced for theft at the London Sessions on 24th August 1909. The prisoner, who was aged seventy-two, had spent forty-seven years in prison, his record being: 1857, six years; 1864, two years; 1867, ten years; 1875, six months; 1879, fourteen years; 1890, two years; 1895, nine months; 1897, seven years; 1903, five years.

[4] See the *Vagrancy Report* prepared by a Commission under the Campbell-Bannerman Administration.

It is agreed on all hands, by the academic student and the man of affairs, by the detached and impartial observer, as well as the party politician intent on snatching an advantage from his antagonist, that a better organisation of the national resources would have saved much of this wreckage. British institutions were flexible and adaptable, and they had the virtues and the failings of those qualities. They were generally in accord with the popular will, and they gave free play to natural growth; but that growth was often wasteful, like the growth and strife of flowers and weeds sown by chance in a fertile soil and untended by any gardener; and the flux of British institutions, while it prevented public discontents, also prevented any high degree of national organisation. Like the multitude, it was inefficient and untrained, and efficiency and training had to be imposed from without.

The planning of the towns, the housing of the people, and the conditions of labour in the factories, left much to be desired. The great work of Dr. Barnardo in London proved conclusively that the thousands of children who ran wild in the streets, and from whose ranks were recruited the criminal, the tramp, and the vagabond, might easily be reclaimed and turned into decent and respectable citizens. A system of medical inspection and instruction such as was introduced in the early twentieth century would have stamped out much popular ignorance on matters of diet and hygiene. The abolition of female labour in the great manufacturing cities would have reduced infant mortality to a minimum;[1] but as it was, the new-born child of a working mother was heavily handicapped when its parent was forced, as she generally was, to return to a long day's labour at the factory, within a week or two after her delivery. Female labour was cheap, and therefore its use seemed necessary to the full development of industry; but it brought in its train such a loss of life as the bloodiest war has never entailed.

---

[1] An excellent sketch of this kind of agitator was given, of all unlikely places, in a light comedy called *Miss Hook of Holland*, which was performed in London in 1907.

Every year there were sacrificed in Lancashire and Yorkshire, in the black country around Birmingham, in the Scottish manufacturing cities, and above all in London, as many infants and children as would have peopled a whole province. Every generation that survived saw the immolation on the greedy altar of commerce of another generation that did not survive. In every great industrial centre the cemeteries were crowded with pathetic little graves which told of young lives cut short, of fruitless effort and of needless sorrow, . . . the silent victims of the industrial age. If the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, not less were the lives of a million children the cost of the commercial supremacy of Britain.

The sacrifice was preventible; and the fact that the greater part of this appalling mortality might have been avoided must ever remain the greatest blot on nineteenth-century England.

But none were found in that age to champion the cause of the helpless infants.[2] Several noble-minded men concerned themselves with the hard conditions of the juvenile workers in the factories; they even did their utmost to stop the evil custom of exposing children in other lands. But they forgot to look at home; the cries of the infants in their own country were unheard; the bitter tears of distraught mothers were unseen; both cries and tears alike were drowned in the loud whirl of the machinery that forged the immense fortunes of the industrial age.

---

[1] Perhaps the most appalling fact about this infantile mortality was that it decreased in bad times. The reason was simple. When trade was slack, female labour was less in demand, and the mothers were able to give more attention to their children.

[2] In one of his celebrated orations attacking the Crimean War, John Bright declared that the angel of death had been busy in the land; 'you could almost hear the beating of his wings.' He could have heard those

Yet who shall say what embryonic genius flickered out, what splendid talents were doomed to the worm before ever they began to ripen, what immortal songs, what pregnant thoughts, were lost in that needless conquest of death? The wanton waste of the national resources weighs heavily in the balance against the many achievements of the time; but in her hour of need our England may yet repent the human sacrifice she made to the god of material wealth.

The Progress of Victorian Britain.

But if the price of industrial empire took a heavy toll in blood, there was still a far brighter side to the picture of nineteenth-century commercial Britain. The young might indeed die from ignorance and neglect; but most of those who survived lived longer, and on the whole they lived under better conditions than their ancestors. The people became more sober; sanitation greatly improved, and an extraordinary advance was made in medical science.

The old nostrums were banished;[1] the tribe of Sangrado

---

wings quite plainly in the cottages surrounding the factories of his own Lancashire; but he forgot to listen there, where no party capital could be made out of death.

[1] A delightful old *Book of Simples*, which I turned over lazily on an idle afternoon, contained the remedies that still served an English lady of the manor in the eighteenth century. Along with recipes for 'posset, whipt sullibub or silliebube, Jockallato drink,' and the Lady Jenkinsons Ointment for ye Pain in ye Stomach,—my lady's spelling was not so good as her heart—were such fearsome cures as: 'For the Biting of a Mad Dog, take filings or scrapeings of pewter Garlick. For the Megrime in the Head, take goates dung and mix it with vinegar of squils. For Convulsion Fits, take a Cat of a quarter old or younger (for a boy a She cat for a girl a He cat) cut off the head and hold the head in one hand and

became extinct. Anæsthetics alleviated pain, and mankind no longer suffered tortures under the surgeon's lancet. The physician combated disease by research, by patient and practical experiment, and with the accumulated knowledge of the laboratories and hospitals of Europe. If in some respects the cynical saying remained true that the medical profession poured drugs of which they knew little into bodies of which they knew less, at least they understood far better the nature of both with every year that passed. And the beneficent results of their labours were writ large in the vital statistics of the age. In 1851 the annual death-rate was 22·2; by 1901 it had fallen to 15·8 per thousand.

Medical Advance.

Some scourges, such as typhus and small-pox, almost disappeared, as a knowledge of hygiene and the practice of vaccination became more common. Fevers were fought and subdued with anti-toxins;[1] tuberculosis indeed remained the prime minister of death, but its ravages were checked and diminished. Cancer alone continued unassailable as a mortal enemy of man; but even here palliatives relieved, although they could not cure the disease.

While the noblest of all professions achieved these results in England, its labours were not unrewarded in the tropics, where careful investigation established the preventible origin

---

the body in the other over a bason that you may catch the blood that comes out . . . then take the breast milk of a healthy woman (if for a boy a girls milk and if for a girl a boys milk) then take a little of the blood alone and anoint the stomach [etc.]. For the Yellow Jaundice, take a peck of garden snails and wash them in a great bowle of beer . . . next take a quart of earth wormes and slit them . . . [mixed with herbs and taken, this was 'approved an excellent cordial']. For the Stone, take 20 bees and kill them as they come out of their hives, some snail shells . . . giving it to ye party when the fits upon them and he shall find (God willing) present ease.' Unfortunately the death statistics in the district served by these old-fashioned household remedies are not available.

[1] 'By Behring's discovery of the diphtheria anti-toxin the case-mortality has been reduced from 28·30 per cent. to 8·10 per cent.'—Allan Macfadyen, M.D., *Lectures on Toxins and Anti-Toxins*.

of many of the diseases to which the inhabitants of those countries had long been subject. Tropical medicine now became a distinct branch of the physician's work; and it became evident that this aspect of the science would in time exert a profound influence on the settlement of white men within the torrid zone of the earth.

Education.

Education had advanced rapidly if unequally in Victorian Britain, reaching gradually from high to low. Oxford, which Cardinal Newman condemned as being 'a mediæval university' in the early nineteenth century, felt the stirrings of fresh life during the first years of the young queen's reign; and so thoroughly was it reformed at this period that Matthew Arnold's description of that ancient foundation as 'the home of lost causes' was quickly obsolete. The sister institution of Cambridge, as befitted a university which had always specialised in mathematics rather than in the classics of the ancient world, assimilated even more of the exact scientific methods which became characteristic of modern study; and the new collegiate establishments of London, Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham raised the general level of learning throughout the country.

A general upheaval, which may be dated roughly from Thomas Arnold's headmastership of Rugby between 1828 and 1842, took place in the time-honoured methods of study pursued at the great public schools; and even more important was the extraordinary advance in female education. The 'young ladies' academies' of the past, kept by the Miss Pinkerton type of schoolmistress, who taught deportment and gentility and little else, gave way to the establishments with which the names of Frances Mary Buss and Dorothea Beale are for ever associated as pioneers. New careers now opened out before women as the ablest of their sisters struggled, often in the face of unreasoning prejudice and jealousy, for a broader and more intellectual way of life; and in spite of certain foolish outbreaks on the part of those who sometimes appeared to imagine that education would emancipate them from the limits which nature has imposed upon the sexes, the advance in the status of women continued unchecked through the whole period.

Nor was the education of the mass of the nation any longer uncared for. While the state still neglected its duty to the children of the poorer classes—a neglect that brought its punishment in later years, when sectarian strife invaded with bitter quarrel the educational field—the Anglican Church founded its own schools, and gave elementary instruction to many thousands. And when the conscience of the nation was at length awakened to the necessity of educating those who could not afford to pay for their own tuition, grants-in-aid were proposed for the Church Schools; but since these were opposed by the nonconformist, a few years later, in 1870, elementary education was made free, compulsory, and universal. The system of instruction remained, it is true, unsatisfactory and incomplete; but at any rate the beginnings of knowledge were now brought home to all.

The Press.

Meanwhile, the growth of the newspaper press had steadily increased with the growth of the reading public, and the taste for the dissemination of news. Improvements in the mechanical processes of printing and publishing rendered possible the production of a daily journal in quicker time, at a cheaper price, and on better paper than before; and the inadequate news-sheets of the previous age developed gradually into powerful organs of public opinion. A few men, foremost among whom were the Walters, proprietors of the London *Times*, fought fearlessly for the complete freedom of the press, a freedom which the Government was eventually forced unwillingly to concede. And the same men, whose enterprises led them to provide their readers with the best news, and to illustrate it by the serious comments of capable writers, raised the newspaper from a tedious, scurrilous, or inaccurate rag to a position in which it was not incorrectly described as the fourth estate of the realm.

The abolition of the duties on advertisements, stamps, and paper between 1836 and 1860 brought many penny daily journals into the field ; while some thirty years later, the larger market offered by the general literacy of the people and the better means of distribution available, owing to the acceleration of transit, rendered the introduction of the halfpenny daily journal possible. Its commercial success was immediate, since it appealed to a new class of public for whom the older newspapers had hardly catered at all ; its success as an elevating force was more dubious. It was not above manipulating its news for the sake of sensation ; its mission was often to startle rather than to inform ; its policy, which frequently pandered to the varying and inconstant popular taste of the moment, veered with the swiftness and uncertainty of a weathercock on a stormy day. Thackeray had once sketched the idea of a journal which should be 'written by gentlemen for gentlemen' ; the new halfpenny press, said Lord Salisbury in a stinging epigram, was written by office-boys for office-boys. It was advanced in its favour, indeed, that it served as an educative force to a public which had only imbibed the mere rudiments of knowledge in the new elementary schools ; and there was possibly some truth in the claim. Its character seemed to improve with competition and the apparent desire of the public for a better article.

But whatever its shortcomings—and many were due to the speed with which it was produced and the consequent superficiality of its arguments—the press became the great medium for the discussion of public questions ; and no cause had much chance of success that was not advocated by some powerful daily newspaper or weekly review.

Journalism as a whole, however, usually followed rather than led public opinion, necessarily considering somewhat closely the particular views of the majority of its readers, even at the height of its power; while the full extent of the liberty which it theoretically possessed was in practice circumscribed by the English impatience of new ideas, and by the necessity of maintaining a large circulation and securing a large revenue from advertisements.[1]

Literature.

Journalism became a recognised and even in some cases a reputable calling, maintaining a close but seldom easily defined connection with less ephemeral forms of literary composition; while literature itself became lucrative and therefore respectable in Victorian England. Instead of an attic or a cellar in Grub Street, with a life of cringing deference to a wealthy patron, authors who found favour with the public began to live at ease; even second-rate writers now obtained a larger income in a year than Goldsmith had done in a lifetime. Unfortunately, the craft did not altogether free itself from the prevailing commercial atmosphere of the age; but this fact notwithstanding, a very large number of excellent works in every department of literature was produced during the period.

Poetry flourished amid the surrounding materialism. Tennyson, the typical Victorian poet, whose verse reflects every movement of the age from the unrest among women to the New Imperialism, belongs to the immortals; Browning would have reached as high a rank had his muse been less obscure; and the gorgeous melody of Swinburne, soaring like a lark into the highest realms of verbal music, was poured forth in the later years of the Victorian period.[2]

---

[1] In this the newspapers were but reverting to the conditions under which the old news-sheets were produced, when they were mainly dependent on advertisements for revenue.

[2] Good poetry was written, but perhaps not much read; and most people probably judged it by an ethical rather than an æsthetic standard. An excellent lady once assured me that she preferred Miss Havergal's verse to Milton's, because of its more elevating character. I forget whether she objected most to the presence of Satan or the absence of rhyme in an epic; in any case, I hastened to assure her in return that some critics preferred Mrs. Hemans to that other domestic poet, Sappho.

The Arts.

Not all the arts were so happy. Serious drama migrated to the Continent, leaving its illegitimate daughter, musical comedy, to console the countrymen of Shakespeare; music remained far from Britain, which produced a Sullivan to Germany's Wagner, a *Bohemian Girl* instead of *Parsifal*. Painting was in better condition, and although it sank for a time to the anecdotal and merely illustrative in the days of Landseer and Frith, it rose again towards the close of the Victorian age under the influence of the New English Art Club; but the gods that preside over the sculptor's work took flight before the heavy hands of those who libelled statesmen and soldiers in stone, or martyred marble to commemorate the mighty dead.

Scientific Progress.

No single definite and concentrated aim marked the vast and indeed unprecedented activity of the age; but from out the mass of divergent intellectual tendencies—which often seemed to veil their real poverty of thought by reliance upon a frequent repetition of outworn shibboleths—in which the nineteenth century drew to a close, there remained as solid, rock-like evidences of work done, the achievements of the new scientific school. While the optimism of the early Victorians was constantly baffled and sometimes defeated, mainly because their conception of life was often sentimental, occasionally rhetorical, and nearly always superficial in that it was based on insufficient knowledge; while the transient wave of pessimism which in some quarters succeeded it was immediately repudiated by every section of the English people as a confession of failure fit only for self-admitted decadents, and as an attitude unworthy of man on the hither side the grave: so both were gradually supplanted by those who worked, perhaps unwillingly and often indeed unconsciously, under the influence of Charles Darwin and his disciples.

The publication of the *Origin of Species* by Darwin in the year 1859 brought to a head the investigations which several previous and contemporary enquirers had been pursuing for many years. The new theory which was advanced in that revolutionary work, of an unchanging order of nature, of an evolution from lower to higher, or more correctly from simple to complex organisms, as the struggle for life between man and man, between beast and beast, even between vegetable and vegetable continued through endless ages, at once gave a new conception to science and a new grandeur to history. Henceforth history looked back, not through some six thousand years to see man falling by temptation from that perfect state in which the Christian theology had pictured him, but through many thousands of ages, during which humanity had ever risen slowly and painfully from primitive, even from animal, instincts and practices towards civilisation. The work of the historian still retained, as of old, its honourable place as one of the sterner and more laborious arts; but it was now likewise recognised as a true department of science, as the grandchild of biology, the daughter of anthropology, and the close ally of ethnology and philology.

The daring yet exact scientific speculations of the age caused an immediate upheaval of thought. Theology took alarm, as the new theories cut at the root of many of the accepted doctrines: if the Darwinian hypothesis were admitted, the Christian explanation of the creation of the world must be abandoned; the belief in the fall of man, in an intervening deity, in inspired revelation itself, must all alike be given up. A controversial battle began, in which the new agnostic rationalist school was attacked with true theological virulence as infidels, as atheists, as the destroyers of the faith and the morals of mankind. But most of the defenders of theology were indifferently equipped, with no more serious weapons than the arguments that had served against the deists of the previous century; the agnostics, on the other hand, were armed with wit as well as knowledge. Huxley brilliantly assisted his master Darwin, and carried the war with joyous enthusiasm into the camp of the enemy; Leslie Stephen brought his cold, clear and logical intellect to the aid of science—it is not the belief in an after life which makes this life worth living, he retorted on his critics, for that belief 'is the embodiment of a profound discontent with the world as it is'; and Tyndall, the close friend of Huxley and the successor of Faraday, threw a gentler but not less clear illumination upon the spiritual problems of the time.

But the agnostic creed was too cold to attract the mass of the people, who preferred a definite faith to an indefinite hypothesis, a symbol to an argument, an uncertain certainty to a certain uncertainty. Theology regretfully but wisely abandoned some of the untenable positions she had taken up: the doctrine of miracles was minimised, the fires of hell were banked, the old belief in a revengeful deity was quietly made to harmonise with the new scientific conception of a god of law. If man still made his god in his own image, he made him a humanitarian, not a capricious judge.

Controversy died down; and as science was tacitly allowed to push her enquiries whither she would in peace, the Church turned to her truer errand of social and missionary work among the ignorant and debased at home and abroad. The same years which saw the rout of Farrar and Wace in the field of apologetics saw also the nobler work of men like Father Dolling among the degraded poor of Portsmouth and Poplar, the foundation of rescue-homes for the outcasts by the Salvation Army and kindred institutions, and the extension of the Anglican episcopate and nonconformist missionary effort to the ends of the earth.

Rationalism, in fact, recoiled helplessly against the inner citadel of religion, as its elder half-brother Protestantism had recoiled three centuries previously against Catholicism; and in both cases the cause was the same. Neither Protestantism nor rationalism satisfied the mystic, poetic, emotional faculties of man; both forgot that mankind is not wholly intellectual, and both were therefore vulnerable in a vital point. The close of the century saw a visible reaction against the agnostic position in religion; and scientific men themselves admitted that the rationalist theory was insufficient as a full and satisfactory explanation of the deeper problems of the universe.[1]

The New Sociology.

But the principles of rationalism were meanwhile increasingly victorious in other branches of thought. Disliked as it was by the great majority of the people, distrusted openly by many who arrogated to themselves the title of leaders of mankind, the scientific method of patient, slow enquiry and tentative, probationary conclusions began to prove itself the solvent of problems which others had attacked with enthusiasm and from which they had retreated in despair. The old indiscriminate philanthropy had proved itself ineffective, if not altogether useless, as a cure for social ills; but Charles Booth, in his monumental work on *Life and Labour in London*, Rowntree, in his study of *Poverty*, and many other investigators of social conditions, grappled with the problem at its source by laying bare the facts. The result was the foundation of the new science of sociology.

The early Victorians, too, had attempted to convert the heathen; the next generation tried with more success to investigate their religion. The eighteenth century prayed for rain to raise the crops; the nineteenth discovered a more effectual method in irrigation. The seventeenth century believed in demonology, and burnt those whom it suspected of witchcraft; the nineteenth set itself to observe the obscure psychical condition of those 'possessed.'[2]

---

[1] The reaction was regretfully admitted by Professor Ernst Haeckel, the leading German agnostic of the time; and with more equanimity by Professor Ray Lankester in a presidential address before the British Association at York.

[2] The great rationalist of the seventeenth century, Hobbes, had lent a hesitating support to the burning of witches, by his statement that 'witches are justly punished for the false belief that they can do such

Only in politics, that pseudo-science which is so often prostituted to the baser elements, that party game in which efficiency is less than victory and progress less than place, were the old banners still flaunted, and dead causes once more galvanised into artificial gesticulations that yet to blind adherents on either side resembled life and living issues. . . .

The Dawn of Democracy.

But in politics, the whole of the long Victorian age was filled with one great movement, the ceaseless onward sweep of democracy in every British community at home and overseas. In the outer empire, indeed, democratic tendencies had the upper hand in almost every colony from the day of its foundation; in Britain itself, as was inevitable in a country whose institutions stretched back deeply and without a break far into the remotest past, the evolution of democracy was slower in its progress and less conclusive in its results. Yet the popular movement was not less strong and irresistible in the home of the race than in its uttermost dependency. By the first English Reform Bill of 1832, which enfranchised the middle classes, the political power of the aristocracy was considerably reduced; by the second Reform Bill of 1867 and its revision in 1885, which enfranchised the working-classes, Britain definitely embraced democracy.[1]

---

mischief, joined with their purpose to do it if they can.' The proposition is not argued with the usual acumen of that great thinker; but the remark is interesting as showing that even a philosopher cannot wholly emancipate himself from the prejudices of his time.

[1] The Crimean war appears to have quickened the popular pressure: in Hawthorne's words, 'The progress of the age is trampling on the aristocratic institutions of England, and they tremble beneath it. This war has given the country a vast tendency towards democracy. . . . This one year has done the work of fifty ordinary ones; or more accurately, it has made evident what has long been preparing itself.' Familiar with the ideas of equality that had reigned in New England since the coming of his ancestors, the novelist thought it a hopeful sign. The conservatism of England, on the contrary, took deep alarm. Tennyson's wild verses,

> 'Equal born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat
> Charm us, Orator, till the lion look no larger than the cat,'

give some idea of the feelings of many as they saw the new power growing stronger.

That Act was admitted by a member of the Cabinet responsible for the measure to be 'a leap in the dark.' It was severely condemned by the more conservative elements in the State, which at once feared and hated the popular revolution that they had been unable to prevent. But the act itself was irrevocable: henceforth for good or evil, Britain was politically a democracy.[1]

Upon that democracy fell the maintenance of empire. The institutions of ancient Rome had narrowed from republicanism to autocracy as the empire broadened; the institutions of modern Britain broadened as the Empire grew in size. And the spirit in which the new-born democracy of Britain faced the manifold problems of empire was henceforth the supreme question for the English people at home and overseas.

CHAPTER II

THE NATION AND THE EMPIRE: 1832-99

During the whole sixty years of the great Victorian age, while profound economic changes were influencing the entire social and political development of Britain at home, the outer empire was growing continually in population, in territory, and in strength. The close of the Napoleonic wars had practically shut off all competition in colonisation, as it had likewise ended all danger of invasion in England; henceforth for nearly a century Britain was Europe to the outer world, and the English people found no serious rival in the path of sovereignty. They were as quick to seize and turn the favourable occasion to their advantage in every quarter of the globe as were the traders and merchants in the new industrial centres of Britain; the adventurers of England showed the same energy, the same vitality, the same ability and resource as their forerunners; and for many years the extraordinary advance of the old country was only paralleled by the equally rapid growth of the British states and protectorates overseas.

---

[1] Politically but not socially. In social matters the aristocracy still retained much of its influence; and although Lady Dorothy Nevill dates the breakdown of the old exclusive barriers before the new plutocracy from the penultimate decade of the nineteenth century, I doubt if there has really been much change. One has only to read *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis* to discover that wealth could buy social position if not genuine respect nearly a century earlier. I doubt if it ever did much less, or will ever do much more.

The Expansion of England.

The military conquest of India was completed; the civil government of the vast dependency, the reform of which had begun some years before the Mutiny of 1857, was completely remodelled after that terrible outbreak had been suppressed.

In the Far East the new British outposts at Singapore and Hongkong served as bases for the extension of trade and political influence; and although no actual possessions were acquired in China beyond the petty protectorate at Wei-hai-wei, there was a large increase of territory in Malaya.

In Africa the British were not less successful. The few small stations which they held along the coasts of that continent were retained, and very largely added to. A steady advance was made towards the interior; one district after another was explored and annexed, and whole countries were thus added to the British Empire within a few years.

In the north of Africa, a curious and entirely unforeseen series of events gave Britain the practical mastery of Egypt and the Sudan. In the east, a compact mass of territory came into her possession, which only needed development to make it a valuable imperial province. In the west, where the slave-dealers of all nations had aforetime plied their evil trade, the British for many years added little to their power; but in the closing years of the nineteenth century the growing prosperity of Nigeria under a series of able administrators covered the native barbarism of that district with the thin veneer of a commercial civilisation.

And in South Africa, where a stubborn conflict for mastery between the old Dutch Boers and the new British settlers culminated in a war which outlasted the Victorian age, the British power was extended from its original outpost at Cape Town, across the rolling veldt and the vineyards of Cape Colony, beyond the desert plains of Griqua and the Bekuanas, over the farms of the Orange River, among the Transvaal mines, and onwards through the magnificent province which is called Rhodesia from the name of its founder, Cecil Rhodes. It reached southwards and eastwards till it included Natal and the lands of the fiery Zulus; and from these unwieldy and inimical constituents was evolved, after several bitter wars, the union of British South Africa which was the leading imperial achievement of the reign of Edward VII.

If there was no expansion of territory in North America, Canada at least was opened up from east to west, and effectual possession taken of that vast dominion; and British emigrants, who at the beginning of the period preferred to go anywhere rather than to a land which was believed to lie in the perpetual grip of frost and snow, poured in at its close by thousands every year.

In South America, indeed, the ill-fortune that had blighted earlier efforts at conquest and colonisation still pursued the few ventures which the British made on a continent where the Latins had always been more successful; but the sovereignty of the antipodes more than compensated for the lost opportunities in the Argentine.

The small Australian settlements, which at the close of the Napoleonic wars contained little but the scum of the mother country's criminal population, had within less than a century become the seat of a new English nation that, though small in numbers, had already in some respects advanced beyond her parent. And New Zealand, which served the early Victorian writers as a useful illustration of a typically savage island, was before the death of the aged queen in 1901 the peaceful abode of nearly a million Britons.

Whole groups of islands in the Pacific were likewise brought under British rule; and although the English statesmen of the Victorian age failed to see the part which that ocean would play in the future history of the world, and thereby forfeited some strategic posts of the utmost value, the British possessions in that great expanse of waters were, nevertheless, neither few nor insignificant.

Opposition to Imperial Expansion.

Thus the empire grew and prospered; and the dual mission of England, as a ruler of other races and the founder of new nations of her own blood, became more clear. But her expansion was for the greater part a growth that was unconscious, or if perceived, distrusted and disliked by many. There was little opposition indeed from without to the expansion of the Empire. No foreign rivals now threatened the advance of England overseas. But at home, and among her own people, there was at this time a profound difference of opinion as to the value and the need of Empire, as to the advantage of possessing colonies and protectorates, and as to the permanence of their allegiance. There were many Englishmen who feared, some who secretly hoped, and a few who openly desired, that England would lose her outer territories; and although their voice was happily never decisive in imperial issues, it is a fact that it sometimes appeared possible that the empire would be destroyed from within, and that, too, at the very period when its vitality and its power for good had never been more marked. The reasons for this peculiar antagonism between the old nation and the new empire are worthy of some consideration.

The first empire of the English people had been built up by Plantagenet monarchs on the continent of Europe. That empire had fallen, never to rise again; but within fifty years after its last outpost fell at Calais in 1558, the beginnings of the second empire were seen when English settlers began to found their stations on the coasts of North America, when Ralegh led expeditions to Guiana, when a company of London merchants engaged in the East India trade. This second empire of the English people grew and flourished for nearly two centuries; and then it likewise fell. The American colonies, its strongest and most valuable provinces, revolted; and in the year 1783 Britain was left with nothing more than the West Indian islands, an unknown and apparently almost useless tract of land in Canada, and some possessions in India, which were, however, rather the property of the East India Company than of Britain itself.

Yet the impulse to expand was still too strong to be resisted. The mighty heart of England contracted on itself, and pulsed forth afresh the blood of new nations; within ten years after the fall of the second empire in America, the foundations of the third were laid as the colony of Ontario was established in Canada and new settlements were planted in Australia. Other conquests were added during the long wars with France; and the victories of Trafalgar and Waterloo secured the third empire, the empire which we have inherited from our fathers, from the danger of foreign aggression.

But the loss of the American colonies had bitten deep into the political thought of the nation. And the remembrance of that loss was reinforced by the knowledge that the Latin colonies in South America had successfully revolted from Spain, that Hayti had successfully revolted from France, and that both the old Latin and the modern French empires had been dismembered of their fairest provinces within the last few years. Men read their Gibbon with the fear that Britain would provide a parallel to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Statesmen were haunted with the belief that the work of building up another empire would be a labour taken in vain; it might survive one generation, perhaps even two or three, but then the new fabric would split again as the old had split already.

The mark of their fears is seen in the whole colonial policy of the Victorian age. They prepared for the secession of the colonies at some future date. They legislated wisely, even generously, by the grant of liberal institutions to the oversea states, but always at the back of their minds lay the conviction that the empire with whose administration they were charged was a passing trust, not a permanent heritage. Their work was therefore often lacking in confidence and grip; it was conscientious, it was painstaking, it was even thorough; but it was usually cold, it was often a grudging and ungrateful duty, and it was never enthusiastic. As an inevitable consequence, the British Colonial Office was always notoriously out of sympathy with colonial aspirations; and 'Downing Street rule' became an expression of proverbial contempt in the outer empire.[1]

The speeches of British politicians, as we shall see, often anticipated the hour of colonial independence, and seldom indeed did anything to discourage the forces making for disunion and separation; the actions of British statesmen almost always opposed the expansion of the Empire by the addition of new territories, and not infrequently attempted to delay the development of territories that were already British. Both speeches and actions failed to convince the hardy pioneers who were doing the real work of empire at the ends of the earth; but the latter forgot to be grateful for the obstructions that were continually placed in their path at home. They found it easier to add a province to the British dominions than to gain sanction for that addition from the British Government; and they remembered bitterly that the guardians of empire had resigned the rich island of Java to the Dutch in 1816, that they had opposed the acquisition of Singapore in 1819, that they had refused for years to recognise Saráwak as a British possession, and that they had thrown away Madagascar. The next generation of pioneers saw the endless mistakes and vacillations of British policy in South Africa; they saw the resignation of a British station in West Africa to the Germans, and the weakness which refused possession of the islands north of Australia until too late.

---

[1] The actual policy of the Colonial Office may be seen in a letter from Sir Henry Taylor, one of its high officials, in 1864, to the Duke of Newcastle. 'When Your Grace and the Prince of Wales,' he wrote, 'were employing yourselves so successfully in conciliating the colonists I thought you were drawing closer ties that might be better slackened if there were any chance of slipping away. I think that a policy which has regard to a not very distant future should prepare facilities and propensities for separation.' The letter is quoted in the *Life of Lord Dufferin*. Less extreme was Sir James Stephen, the Permanent Under-Secretary, who wrote in 1850 that 'no wise or reasonable man would ever affirm broadly and generally that a mother country ought at some time or other to part with her colonies. England ought never to give up a single colony. The course taken with Canada is the only right course; that of cheerfully relaxing the bonds of authority as soon as the colony clearly desired. It remains for the Canadians to cut the last cable which anchors them to us. But it is for them, not for us, to take that step.'—*The Right Hon. Sir James Stephen: Letters with Biographical Notes by his Daughter*. The book was printed for private circulation.

And Lord Dufferin records (*Life of Lord Dufferin*) that 'after I had been appointed to Canada, Lowe came to me and said, "Now, you ought to make it your business to get rid of the Dominion," to which I replied that I certainly did not intend to be handed down to history as the Governor-General who had lost Canada.'

But while they saw these things, they relaxed not their efforts. The Empire of Britain grew; but it grew because the pioneers were stronger than the politicians, and because the solid constructive work of the former was more effective and more lasting than the timorous obstruction and the pessimistic prophecies of the latter.

This widespread pessimism as to the future of the Empire was the more remarkable in that it was in sharp contrast to the general optimism of the age; but of its existence there can be no doubt whatever. The sentiment had taken firm root in every class and among all political parties; the only distinction that can be drawn is that, while all looked on disruption as inevitable, some regarded the idea with dislike and dread, and others—probably a minority but an extremely able and influential minority—looked forward to the separation of Britain from her empire as an act of policy that would be advantageous and profitable to all parties concerned.

The great tory, or as it was subsequently called, the conservative, party, was sometimes taunted by its opponents with the desire of preserving the colonies and fomenting wars of aggression in its own interest; since the colonies and the army, it was said, provided employment for the aristocracy, and the majority of the English aristocracy supported the tories. There was little foundation for the gibe, for the free trade policy of Britain, which was detested in every colony, was inaugurated in 1846 by a tory government under Sir Robert Peel, in the teeth of strong colonial opposition; and Benjamin Disraeli, the brilliant politician who was slowly conquering the distrust of his colleagues and fighting his way towards the leadership of the conservative party and the premiership of Britain, was emphatic in his repudiation of the imperialism which he subsequently professed. He had been a conservative member of parliament for fifteen years when he remarked contemptuously in 1852 that 'those wretched colonies will all be independent in a few years, and [they] are a millstone round our necks.' Ten years later he stated that 'England is in possession of everything which a free, proud, and rational country can desire; and I entirely dismiss any consideration' as to the necessity of increased expansion and defence. And in the year 1858 Lord Derby, the conservative prime minister, refused to recognise Brooke's splendid services in Borneo, remarking that there was 'extreme inconvenience, to say the least of it, in such undertakings; [and] he looked with very great jealousy to increasing the number of our dependencies and new settlements; they were not additions of strength but of weakness.'

The tories, too, who had opposed and who continued to oppose the advance of democracy in England,[1] had scant sympathy with the democratic leanings of the colonies. Nor did they look with any more favour on the growth of liberal institutions overseas than at home; the policy of colonial self-government which Durham recommended,[2] and which proved so fruitful of good results, was distrusted as the radical proposal of a radical peer.

The other leading political party, the whigs, were equally devoid of imperial consciousness. At the beginning of the Victorian age the whig premier, Lord Melbourne, admitted in his private correspondence that he would have contemplated the revolt of Canada with equanimity had he not foreseen, with the unfailing accuracy of instinct that alone moves the true party politician, the unfortunate effect of such a catastrophe upon his administration. 'The final separation of British North America,' he wrote on 22nd July 1837 to Lord Durham, 'might possibly not be of material detriment to the interests of the mother country; but it is clear that it would be a serious blow to the honour of Britain, and certainly would be fatal to the character and existence of the administration under which it took place.'

Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary of the Melbourne Cabinet, was a constant handicap on colonial progress;[3] the radical section of the party, which gave a grudging and irregular support to the official whigs, was far more outspoken in its desire for disruption. Joseph Hume, a prominent radical politician of the time, declared in 1837 that 'the crisis which is fast approaching in the affairs of Canada will terminate in independence and freedom from the baneful domination of the mother country, and the tyrannical conduct of a small and despicable faction in the colony.'

---

[1] In 1852, for instance, Lord Derby professed himself ready to support any administration which was sincerely anxious to check the growth of democracy in England.—*Letters of Queen Victoria.*

[2] See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iv.

[3] See bk. xi. ch. iv.; and bk. xviii. ch. iv.

Roebuck, whose opinions on this as on other matters coincided with those of Hume, agreed that the time 'must inevitably come when all the American colonies were independent states.' And Jeremy Bentham, the great philosophic radical of the day, convinced himself and many others that colonies were a useless and burdensome drag upon the state which possessed them.

The liberals, who succeeded in the difficult task of uniting in one party the old whigs and the new radicals, were equally imbued with the belief that the empire was a transient and perhaps embarrassing phenomenon in the political situation. The theory of government which they professed, and which was excellently described by the name of the party, gave them indeed a closer affinity with the prevailing sentiment of the rising colonial democracies than either whigs or tories could have claimed. The liberal constitutions which they drew up for the colonies were of inestimable value to the Empire as a whole; in this connection the influence of Gladstone in particular was beyond all praise, and fully justified the boast of his successor Campbell-Bannerman, that as regards its constitution 'the colonial empire had been built up by the principles of the liberal party; if it had not been for the application of that principle it would have gone to pieces years ago.'[1]

But even by Gladstone, the greatest genius of liberal institutions that the world had yet produced, the colonial connection of Britain was regarded, in the measured words of his biographer Morley, as 'one of duty rather than advantage.' It is true that he never openly advocated, as did some of his contemporaries, the disruption of the Empire, and there is little actual evidence[2] to show that he thought disruption inevitable or desirable. But he considered that Britain was too heavily weighted with imperial responsibilities; and although he recognised 'that undoubtedly the possession of territory was valuable provided one knew how to make use of it,'[1] he never ceased to protest against any expansion of dominion, and only consented unwillingly to the annexations of territory which took place from time to time under the various governments of which he was Prime Minister.

---

[1] Speech at Crieff, 18th January 1906.

[2] In his *Reminiscences*, Goldwin Smith states that Gladstone wrote him a letter during the American Civil War suggesting that if the division of the United States into North and South took place, as many anticipated at that time, Canada might renounce her allegiance to

Yet on at least one occasion towards the close of his life, Gladstone's words gave evidence that he had some conception of the possibilities of empire. In the year 1881, after claiming that liberal policy had given to the colonies the same rights in the management of their own affairs as were possessed by the English at home, he remarked that the men who had obtained this boon were in consequence 'closely and cordially attached to the name and throne of England; and that if perhaps a day of difficulty and danger should arise, we might obtain from their affection that assistance and advantage which compulsion would never have wrung from them, and might find that every portion of the Empire had one common heart, beating with one common compulsion, and equally devoted to the honour and interests of their common country.' There spoke the imperialist; but the record of the ministry of which Gladstone then formed the head gave scant credence to his words. And it is by deeds, not by words, that the statesman is judged.

---

the British Empire and join the Northern States. Although Goldwin Smith approved these views, he tacitly admitted that they were unpopular in England, for he destroyed Gladstone's letter on the ground that it might have harmed his political career.

I am not sure that this evidence is of much value; for Goldwin Smith's *Reminiscences*, written forty years afterwards, show many signs of inaccurate or failing memory.

[1] Address before Chester Mechanics Institute, 12th November 1855. He also remarked that colonies were 'not to be desired for vainglory, nor revenue, nor trading monopoly, nor patronage; they were desirable both for the material and moral and social results which a wise system of colonisation was calculated to produce.'

If Gladstone, however, realised in some degree the importance of the outer empire—'it was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh,' he cried enthusiastically in one of his Midlothian speeches—the lesser lights of the liberal party, and the advanced radical wing in particular, were outspoken in their reprobation of expansion and their anticipations of disruption. And in this matter there was practical unanimity throughout the whole of the Victorian age, from the time of Melbourne and Roebuck in 1837 to the final struggle in 1899 between Briton and Boer in South Africa, when some staunch liberals carried on a secret correspondence with the enemy, and others, who subsequently rose to high office in the state, disgraced themselves by foul slanders upon the British troops.

The inevitable result was that, although there were some conspicuous exceptions to the prevailing sentiment, the British liberal party, as a whole, eventually came to be considered as definitely and unalterably anti-imperial in its policy; and despite the fact that the new colonial democracies naturally had more in common with the more democratic of the two great political parties in Britain, they nevertheless swung round after a time to sympathise mainly with the tories or conservatives, who in the later years of the Victorian age became associated with a strongly unionist and imperial policy. The cause of this curious change was clearly explained by Sir Richard Tangye, an earnest radical who had obtained considerable insight into colonial opinion in the course of several business journeys to the ends of the earth. 'Although the Australian colonies owe their institutions to the liberal party in England,' he wrote, 'their affinity to the tory party—the sworn foe of democratic institutions—is infinitely greater than to liberalism, which gave them free institutions. . . . It is not because they love toryism, or are under any illusions as to its tendencies, but because their natural political allies of the liberal party have almost uniformly shown a marked indifference to their sentiment and aspirations. The colonists feel that, in times gone by, the action of the liberal party has been too much like that of a stepmother, whose great aim is supposed to be to cut adrift the children of her predecessor as soon as possible.'[1]

The liberals, in fact, acted throughout on the supposition that full independence and complete separation from the motherland was the proper and natural aim and desire of the colonies. Their legislation showed it; their speeches proved it. But the colonies had no such desire. They insisted, indeed, upon the ordinary civil rights of Englishmen in an English community; and they agitated for full control over their own internal affairs. Those rights and that control they obtained, mainly through the acts of liberal statesmen in England; but having once obtained them, the colonies had no intention of going further. Interest and sentiment alike bound them to Britain; and in its failure to perceive this lay the fundamental error of British liberalism in its relation to imperial policy from the beginning till near the end of the Victorian age. It was the great achievement of British liberalism, in short, that it secured to every colony of white men in the British Empire the freedom to work out its own salvation; it was the great fault of British liberalism to believe that that salvation must lead directly to secession and disruption.

---

[1] Reid's *Life of Sir Richard Tangye*. He was the founder of the great Birmingham engineering firm of Tangyes.

The belief that disruption was inevitable was not confined to politicians. It may be noticed in one of Marryat's novels; and Nathaniel Hawthorne agreed with him on this point. 'I cannot help imagining,' Hawthorne wrote in his Diary as he watched the building of the new Houses of Parliament at Westminster, 'that this great and noble edifice has more to do with the past than with the future; that it is the glory of a declining empire; and that the perfect bloom of this great stone flower, growing out of the institutions of England, forebodes that they have nearly lived out their life. Its beauty and its magnificence are made out of ideas that are gone by.'

Sir John Franklin also, who had travelled in most parts of the empire and was the most patriotic of men, openly discussed the abandonment of the colonies as an advantage both to them and to Britain; in 1829 he thought it 'probable that the Canadas must eventually be independent, and if this concession were granted with grace, the change would be beneficial in point of trade to England.'

During the first half of the Victorian Age the liberals were the dominant political party in England. From the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832 till the fall of the Gladstone ministry in 1874 their opponents, the tories or conservatives, held office for less than ten years out of forty-two; and even during the short and troubled times when they were in power, they gave no sign of constructive imperialism. The liberals meanwhile abandoned the old colonial system for one conferring self-government but practically inviting secession—a secession which both the language and the acts of some leading men were carefully calculated to foster. But in so far as liberal policy was bad, in that it tended to the disruption of the Empire, it was not generally repudiated or condemned by the conservatives; and in so far as it was good, as tending to do away with the old objectionable system of centralised control from Downing Street, the conservatives do not appear to have had in contemplation the inauguration of any such policy. The liberals, in fact, were active both for good and evil; the conservatives were usually impotent in both respects.

Origins of the Anti-Imperial Policy.

A policy that was more or less consciously, but to a large extent consistently anti-imperial in its aim was therefore in practice a prominent feature of British administration during a considerable portion of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the Empire continued; but it was opposed at home. The development of the colonies continued; but it was heralded as a sign of disruption.

At other periods of our history, both expansion and development had been, and were again to be, encouraged and welcomed as a sign of increasing national strength; for the expansion, retention, and development of territory has generally been considered a roughly accurate test of racial vitality, as the loss of territory is of racial decay. A nation may indeed lop off a branch to save the trunk; it may abandon a colony to concentrate on the defence of the motherland: but it usually leaves the process of dismemberment to rivals.

Yet during some forty years of active development at home and overseas, a precisely contrary theory prevailed in Britain. To many, perhaps even to a majority of the leaders of public opinion, it seemed that the interests of the nation and the empire were opposed, that the nation would be stronger without the empire, and that on every ground—political, social, moral, and commercial—the old nation should repudiate, or at least discourage, the new empire it had founded.

The Fear of Rebellion.

1. One reason for that belief may be traced, as we have seen, to the revolt of the American colonies in the previous century, and to the consequent fear that it was useless to found other colonies which would in due course follow the example of New England and Virginia in declaring their independence. But that reason, although weighty in its effect on public opinion, was by no means the sole, or even the chief argument of those who opposed the expansion and retention of the empire.

Prejudice against the Colonies.

2. A second reason may be discovered in the fact that the people of the colonies and the pioneers of empire generally were not at this time held in very high esteem in Britain. The accounts which several English travellers had published as to the condition and character of the Canadians were not altogether laudatory.[1] The reputation of Australia was far more equivocal; nor, seeing that the antipodes had been made the dumping-ground of two generations of English criminals, could it be said that the evil reports were

---

[1] See bk. xi. ch. iii.

undeserved.[1] And even Gibbon Wakefield, the pioneer of a new system of colonisation, and one who held that 'the possession of an immense empire by England causes the mere name of England to be a real and mighty power,' admitted that 'our colonies cost us money, much trouble, and not a little shame, without rendering any important services to us in return.'

The anti-slavery agitation, too, had done much to render the colonies unpopular at home. The missionaries who were sent out to the West Indies, to British Guiana, and to South Africa by the religious and philanthropic societies of England at once took up an attitude of determined enmity to the white planters and slave-owners. That attitude was natural, since the planters had opposed their coming, and detested their errand of bringing Christianity to the slaves; but if the missionaries suffered some persecution on the field of their labours, they took an ample revenge at home.[2] Every report which they sent to their employers contained highly-coloured descriptions of the brutalities committed by the planters; and these descriptions lost nothing in the repetition, when they were reproduced before horrified and by no means incredulous audiences at anti-slavery meetings in England. The evil deeds—and they were many—of the planters were magnified and dwelt upon, since they strengthened the case of the abolitionists; but the kindly acts of the planters—which were also far from few in number—were ignored.[3]

---

[1] The results of the transportation policy were correctly predicted by Bacon in his *Essay on Plantations*: 'It is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people, and wicked condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant. And not only so, but it spoileth the plantation. For they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country to the discredit of the plantation.' For Gibbon Wakefield, see vol. v. bk. xviii. ch. iv.

[2] The opposition of the missionaries to the planters was also due in some degree to the fact that the missionaries came of a different social class in England.

[3] See bk. xiii. ch. iii.

The result was that a very large proportion of the British public came to regard the planters as the children of the devil, and as cruel fiends who tortured their helpless belongings from motives of caprice, wantonness, or even enjoyment; and thousands of those who shuddered at the lurid mental picture which was thus conjured up for them were too ignorant to distinguish between the colonial planter who employed his slaves in a tropical dependency, and the ordinary emigrant to a temperate colony who gained his livelihood by his own strenuous exertions. The reputation of all alike was blackened in the zealous endeavour to improve the condition of the native races under British rule.

The weak side of the New Humanity was that it had not yet learned to discriminate; unconsciously it loved to be shocked, and its own virtuous promptings were felt to be the more edifying in the dark contrast of other persons' vice.

Thus there grew up the legend that the colonial Briton was a cruel, callous, and frequently immoral type of man, who was at best indifferent to the sufferings of others, and who at worst delighted in those sufferings. There was, it is true, something to support the idea, for the colonist has no monopoly of virtue, and the methods of a pioneer in a rough world are apt to be rough. But the legend was absurdly exaggerated; and, once created, it died hard.[1] And it was supported by the ingenious theory that the people of the colonies were interested in provoking wars with the aborigines; since such a war called for the presence of British troops among them, and thus led to the circulation of British money in their province.[2]

---

[1] In the 1906 Parliament a member of the House of Commons referred to the people of Natal as 'bloodthirsty murderers'; and the prolonged agitation carried on in England against that colony about that time provoked a leading politician in Natal to refer to the 'damnable interference' of the imperial authorities.

[2] This theory may be found in full luxuriance in Cobden's writings. See particularly his pamphlet (1853) *How Wars are got up in India.* Many pamphlets were also published condemning Brooke's severe measures against the pirates of Borneo.

Free Trade.

3. This prejudice against the people of the colonies undoubtedly assisted the anti-imperial movement, as did also the prevailing sentiment that the oversea dependencies were unstable and temporary possessions whose revolt might be expected at no distant date. But the real driving-force that gave the anti-imperial movement by far the greater part of its strength was the same economic motive which was now influencing the whole industrial, political, and social development of Britain. As England became more and more a commercial and manufacturing nation, men were invited to consider, and in time they began to consider, the empire from a purely commercial point of view; and from that standpoint there was at that time some foundation for the theory that the Empire was a failure.

Cobden on the Empire.

The colonial trade of Britain, said Richard Cobden, the most prominent of the anti-imperial politicians, was only ten millions sterling a year; and to maintain that trade, Britain spent five millions sterling a year on colonial administration.[1] The argument thus baldly stated was specious and not unconvincing; and to the counter-argument that the colonial trade would grow with the growth of the colonies, the answer was made that when the colonies grew larger they would no longer be politically dependent on Britain; but that, even when they separated from the mother country, they would still trade with her as the United States had done since their separation from the empire.

The leaders of the British free trade school, which triumphed in the year 1846 after a long political crusade by Richard Cobden and John Bright, were avowedly opposed to territorial aggrandisement in any shape or form, and, in fact, to the ownership of any territory outside the limits of their own country at all. They not only protested strongly against the continual expansion of England, but they even desired her to loose her hold over the countries which she already possessed.

---

[1] Cobden, speech in 1843, quoted in Morley's *Life*.

The new party, which was politically powerful from the fact that it had forced free trade on a reluctant House of Commons, and morally influential from the obvious sincerity and almost religious fervour of its two great orators, quickly became the head and front of the anti-imperial movement which had existed, albeit with but little success, before the great change in British fiscal policy. The free trade leaders—or Little Englanders, as they were derisively but not unjustly called in later years—cared nothing for the empire which had been built up in three centuries at the cost of so much blood and treasure. Both blood and treasure, in their opinion, had been thrown away; and they hated the modern Empire of Britain as the heads of the small mediæval trading republics hated the older Romano-German Empire. They judged solely by two standards: the standard of commerce, and the standard of peace. By the former they found the oversea possessions of their country useless; by the latter they found them dangerous.

The spirit of conquest, which had obtained and might enlarge those possessions, was obviously antagonistic to the spirit of peace which they inculcated. And the free exchange of commerce, which they preached as a cure for most of the ills which then afflicted Britain, naturally rendered the colonies valueless, if their value was judged, as in fact it was judged at that time, by the low standard of mere commercial utility.

It was undeniable that the colonies were costly to maintain. It was accepted that the colonists would themselves develop their agricultural resources, whether or not they continued to acknowledge the suzerainty of the British Crown. And since the universal acceptance of free trade—which was postulated as axiomatic[1]—was to admit colonial products, like those of every other country, without restriction to our shores, while our products were naturally to be admitted free of duty by every community, whether British or foreign, the abandonment of the colonies by Britain would obviously relieve her of the cost of their maintenance, while it would not damage in any respect her colonial trade.

---

[1] 'I believe that if you abolish the Corn Law honestly, and adopt free trade in its simplicity, there will not be a tariff in Europe that will not

The Little Englanders therefore repudiated the wise Baconian maxim that colonies should not be abandoned by the parent state;[1] they held that it would be for the advantage of both that there should be a separation. How sedulously these views were advocated is easily seen by a brief reference to the published speeches and pamphlets of Bright and Cobden.

In the year 1858 the former declared that 'many persons held a superstitious traditionary belief that English greatness depended upon the extent of English conquests and English military renown. But I am inclined to think that, with the little exception of Australia, there is not a single dependency of the Crown, if we come to reckon what it has cost in war and protection, would not be found to be a positive loss to the people of this country.' On another occasion he admitted that he would not object to the separation of Canada from Britain; it would be better for both to do so.

And he was still more resolute in condemning fresh acquisitions of territory. 'They add to the burdens of the people who inhabit Great Britain and Ireland. We take the burden and we pay the charge. This policy may lend a seeming glory to the Crown, and may give scope for patronage and promotion and pay and pensions to a limited and favoured class, but to you, the people, it brings expenditure of blood

---

be changed in less than five years, to follow your example.'—Cobden at Manchester, 15th January 1846.

[1] 'It is the sinfullest thing in the world to forsake or destitute a plantation once in forwardness; for besides the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.' Incidentally the Little Englanders proved the truth of another Baconian axiom, that men of commerce should not control the affairs of an empire.

and treasure, increased debts and taxes, and added risks of war in every quarter of the globe.'[1]

Cobden was not less emphatic than Bright; and he urged his opinions with untiring iteration upon a public which was not altogether in agreement with his frank denunciation of empire. He admitted, indeed, that 'there was much clinging to colonies at the present moment, amongst the middle class as among the aristocracy, and the working people were not wiser than the rest.'[2] But the whole burden of his message was to disabuse England of the idea that empire was profitable; for any recognition of the fact that it might be honourable one looks in vain in his speeches.

He ridiculed the argument that British West Indian sugar, now grown by free labour, should receive a preferential tariff over the slave-grown sugar of foreign nations;[3] his commercial theory considered nothing but the cheapness of the commodity and the convenience of the consumer, it took no count of the conditions of production. His principles were acted upon, and within a few years hundreds of planters in the British colonies were ruined;[4] but that was of no moment to Cobden. He had already stated that colonies were a drag upon England, since they contributed nothing to our revenue, and only burdened us with civil and military expenses.[5]

---

[1] See Bright's speeches, 29th October 1858 and 25th October 1879. See also a letter (14th January 1860) in *The Public Letters of the Right Hon. John Bright, M.P.*: 'I am not sanguine that we shall easily produce any change in the Indian government. The whole concern is one of patronage, and those who now hold the good things will not willingly give them up. . . . The interests (of India) are left to the tender mercies of an exclusive service whose main object of adoration is patronage.' A minor follower of Bright, Goldwin Smith, echoed his views. 'When we come to actual advantages, a perennial supply of old Indians spending Indian pensions at Bath or Cheltenham seems the main item on the side of profit.'—Letter in London *Daily News*, 1862. And see Cobden in 1864, 'I defy you to show that the nation has any interest whatever in India except by the commerce we carry on there.'

[2] Cobden, 23rd December 1848.

[3] Morley's *Life of Cobden*, ch. xii.

[4] See bk. xiii. ch. i. and ii.

[5] Cobden in 1844.

He would willingly have given up Gibraltar for a commercial treaty with Spain;[1] and he rejoiced that 'under the régime of free trade Canada was not a whit more ours than was the great republic.'[2]

It was one of his great arguments in favour of free trade in fact, that it would assist in the destruction of the Empire. 'The colonial system,' said Cobden on 12th April 1842, 'with all its dazzling appeals to the passion of the people, can never be got rid of except by the indirect process of free trade, which will gradually and imperceptibly loose the bonds which unite our colonies to us by a mistaken notion of self-interest.'

The new fiscal system failed to achieve the end for which he had looked; and disaster was therefore prophesied if the imperial connection was obstinately maintained. 'If we do not draw in our horns, this country, with all its resources, will sink under the weight of its extended empire.'[3]

To these opinions Cobden adhered to the end. In the last year of his life, when the problem of Canadian federation was perplexing the Empire, he 'failed to discover any immediate interest which the British people had in the matter.' It seemed to him 'a perilous delusion to attempt to keep up a sham connection and dependence. . . . In my opinion, we should as speedily as possible sever the political thread by which we are as communities connected, and leave the individuals on both sides to cultivate the relations of commerce and friendly intercourse as with other nations. I have felt an interest in this confederation scheme, because I thought it was a step in the direction of an amicable separation. Whatever may be the wish of the colonies will meet with the concurrence of our government and parliament. We have recognised their right to control their own fate, even to the point of asserting their independence whenever they think fit, and which [*sic*] we know to be only a question of time.' The next half-century showed that in imperial politics, as in the more familiar region of commerce, Cobden was a false prophet.

---

[1] 'If the Government would let me go to Spain with an offer to cede Gibraltar, I could get from the Spanish Government such a commercial treaty at an enormous advantage. . . . It would not be much to give away, for Gibraltar is of no value whatever as a check to the entrance into the Mediterranean.'—Cobden, quoted by Thorold Rogers in *Cobden and Political Opinion.*

[2] Cobden, 8th February 1849.

[3] Cobden, 8th February 1849.

But if he disliked the colonial connection, he detested that with India and Africa; and in dealing, as he frequently did, with this aspect of British expansion, his language was as passionate as it was usually exaggerated and often absurd. He referred to the Indian victories of Dalhousie as 'a page in those bloody annals for which God will assuredly exact a retribution from us or our children';[1] and when the Indian Mutiny broke out four years later he seized upon the crisis as the vindication of his prophecy, and as an opportunity of enforcing his belief. 'Prepare for abandoning at some future time,' he wrote, 'the thankless and impossible task' of Asiatic sovereignty; he saw 'no future but trouble and loss and disappointment and, I fear, crime in India.'[2] A month previously he had stated that 'it would be a happy day when England had not an acre of territory in continental Asia';[3] and as for Africa, 'for my part, if France took the whole of Africa,' he declared, she would do no harm to 'us or anybody else save herself.'[4]

Yet despite all his protests, the expansion of empire continued; so little can the life-work of one man avail against the necessity of a nation. But Cobden still loathed the growth of British power in the East; the Government of India, he said, was 'a calamity and a curse to the people of England.'[5] The Burmese war was 'outrageous,' for 'common sense, logic, and philanthropic sentiment' were on the side of the Burmese. Lord Dalhousie's minute relating to that war was 'quite feminine,' and in an abridged form an 'unstatesmanlike, immoral, and illogical production.' Cobden hoped, however, that the national conscience, which 'had before averted from England the punishment due for imperial crimes, would be roused ere it was too late from its lethargy, and put an end to the deeds of violence and injustice which had marked every step of our progress in India.'[1]

---

[1] Cobden, 27th February 1853.

[2] Cobden, 16th October 1857.

[3] Cobden, 22nd September 1857.

[4] Cobden in 1859.

[5] Cobden, 4th August 1860.

Such language, which was echoed by all the Little Englanders of minor reputation was, however, resented at home as well as overseas, in the latter case perhaps especially because Cobden and his allies were far too ready to bring accusations of moral depravity against the people of the colonies. Those accusations they were often unable to prove, but they sometimes omitted to retract the original ill-founded charge.[2] In this they showed both ignorance and a lack of sympathy with their kinsmen, which caused the deadly taunt to be levelled at them that their hearts were not English; and however unjust might be the accusation that they were the friends of every country save their own, and the upholders of a peace-at-any-price policy, we cannot wonder that the passion of the hour labelled them with an opprobrious nickname for which there was in fact some foundation. Patriotism cannot be calculated in pounds sterling; other forces at times mould empires and move the world than merely commercial ones; and it seems curious that the advocates of *laisser faire* and free trade could not allow that the Empire itself must have freedom to expand as well as its commerce.

But these men were not wilfully unpatriotic;[3] that foul and poisonous plant seldom finds much nourishment on the healthy soil of Britain. And the Little Englanders would have repudiated with honest indignation the suggestion that they were acting against the best interests of their country in desiring the disruption of the Empire. They held that empire was evil, that it sapped the strength of Britain, that it might lead to dangerous complications and dishonourable wars; and the doctrine of an 'enlightened self-interest,' which was one of their chief tenets, led them to preach the gospel of peace, for they rightly held that peace was more advantageous to their country than war. The higher and more altruistic motive was not indeed lacking; but at least they were fully conscious that only by the maintenance of an unbroken peace could Britain develop her industries to the extent which they desired.

---

[1] Cobden's *How Wars are got up in India.*

[2] See particularly Cobden's accusation against Brooke of Borneo, which he neither proved nor withdrew, bk. xv. ch. iv.

[3] The patriotism of the Little Englanders, which has been somewhat obscured in the dust of later controversies, would probably never have been impugned had not the warmth of their pacific feelings led them to traduce the conduct of our armies in the field, as well as the statesmen

But the patriotism of the Little Englanders was restricted to the two islands which form the United Kingdom. They would have abandoned the colonies and India, because they could see no advantage to Britain in their retention; but Cobden at least had no hesitation in advocating the maintenance of British naval supremacy.[1] They believed, in fact, that under free trade they would possess all the commercial advantages of empire without any of its disadvantages; and for that reason alone they would listen to no protests from the colonies against the abolition of the protective imperial tariff.

---

responsible for the campaigns. They were actuated, as indeed they stated with somewhat unnecessary iteration, by the highest of desires for our national reputation; but they were too ready to accept any slanderous statement without adequate inquiry, and they forgot that soldiers absent on duty cannot defend themselves. See particularly the disgraceful speeches of Lloyd George during the South African War, for which he was properly rebuked by Lord Haldane, a member of his own party.

[1] 'So far am I from wishing that we should be unarmed, and so little am I disposed to place my country at the mercy of France, that I would, if necessary, spend one hundred millions sterling to maintain an irresistible superiority over France at sea.'—Cobden, 2nd August 1860.

There was, it is true, some substantial basis for the narrowness of their outlook on national affairs. Men who had seen the grave changes introduced in England by the substitution of the enclosed system of agriculture for the open field, by the change from rural to urban life, and from hand to machine work, were in no mood to sympathise with the upheaval of colonial industry that was caused by the change of fiscal policy, even if they had been otherwise inclined to sympathise with the colonies, which they were not. And when free trade was introduced in 1846, there were other signs of internal trouble that might menace the future of England. The long political peace of Europe had not brought industrial peace to Britain. The Peterloo rioting of 1819, although it had occurred a generation back, was not yet forgotten. The Chartist agitation, though virtually dead, was still a sinister memory, that might yet divide the nation into dangerous factions between the propertied and privileged and the non-propertied and non-privileged classes. The riots in the manufacturing districts, of which so graphic an account is given in *Shirley* and *John Halifax, Gentleman*,[1] were not yet at an end. And the discontent of the labouring classes at the introduction by their employers of machinery which seemed about to deprive them of the means of livelihood, was a dangerous symptom of social disease in the very heart of the great industrial community.

The Commercial Cosmopolitan Ideal.

These causes alone were sufficient to turn the scale against the latent imperial sentiment of the time; and they were aided by the strong conviction that a new political era had dawned for Europe and the world. Men were still under the pleasing delusion that the golden age of peace had come, and that the ties of race and blood were now of small importance, since the brotherhood of the whole human race would soon be recognised. It was a dream, in some respects a not ignoble dream; but still it was a dream, and as such it was subject to the rude disillusionment of waking hours, when the stern reality of human passions and ambitions, and the incessant struggle for national growth and expansion, shattered in a moment the clay idol of a commercial peace.

---

[1] It is curious that three women writers, Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell, and Mrs. Craik have given us the best pictures of these industrial disorders in fiction. Were they more impressed by the dangers to the home than the men of the day?

For the delicate and still unsoiled garments of a suppositious international brotherhood hardly concealed the very real image of British commercial supremacy in the vision of the Little Englanders. If all the world was to be at peace, England was still to lead it in peace as in war. Her commerce was to dominate the oceans in the future as her fighting navies had done in the past. Her manufactures were to be found in every capital from Pekin to Valparaiso, and the raw materials of those manufactures were to be drawn from the fields, forests, and mines of all the nations. The whole earth, in fact, was henceforth to be an industrial but not a political dependency of Britain.

It says much for the energy of the early Victorian age that our merchants went far to realise the ideal of British commercial supremacy, as it does for their successors that they maintained in some degree their lead over later rivals; it does not, however, say much for their perspicacity that they were so easily persuaded that other nations would adopt free trade, and acquiesce in the commercial supremacy of Britain. But the rapid growth of foreign manufacturing powers in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the adoption of restrictive import tariffs in foreign and colonial markets, did not enter into the forecasts of the British free traders; and to that extent their conceptions were as fundamentally false as they were short-sighted.

But while these doctrines of imperial disruption and of an universal commercial peace were being urged for the space of a generation, great new forces meanwhile came surging up and arresting attention; race-consciousness, national-consciousness, class-consciousness, a synthetic movement developing clusters of divided states into new empires, an analytic movement tending to break up existing empires into petty, unstable autonomies: problems of life, of labour, of capital, pressing with a hitherto unknown insistence; sporadic displays of anarchy that aimed at destroying all existing civilisation, and the more regular propaganda of its deadly opponent, socialism, that strove for ordered but organic change; and with all a feverish haste and superficial restlessness, in which, as in the clamour of dissonant factions, contradictory voices, and dissentient minorities, the expectations of perpetual peace were finally dissipated. . . .

In Britain itself the beginning of the new democratic era in 1867 synchronised with many notable and far-reaching changes. Those changes were not perhaps directly caused by democracy; for the giant, if he no longer slept, had not yet learned to use his power. But they were signs that the solutions which had satisfied the previous generation would no longer be accepted, that questions which many had believed to be finally answered by the inauguration of free trade raised deeper issues than had been perceived at the time. Here, too, as in those other aspects of the Victorian age which we have already touched upon, there were signs of disillusionment invading the cherished optimisms of the past. There was now a tendency to go back over the old ground, to till it again with a machine of finer mesh, and to give a more critical examination both to the soil and to its products, whether immediate or secondary.

If free trade had succeeded in some directions, it had not in others; and three at least of Cobden's predictions had been singularly falsified by time. Foreign nations had not adopted the policy of free imports: on the contrary, there was a very definite tendency to safeguard their manufactures against Britain by protecting their home markets. English agriculture, too, had not remained immune under the change of fiscal policy, as had been expected;[1] on the contrary, it had seriously declined. And the British Empire had not vanished from the earth.

The Nationalist and Constitutional Movements Abroad.

Abroad, too, a series of profoundly significant changes were in progress, which in time gave pause to those who had prematurely adopted the commercial-cosmopolitan creed in England. The hopes of perpetual peace that had been held out in the early Victorian age had faded one by one; the baseless fabric of a vision, they disappeared before the generation which gave them birth. The Great Exhibition held in London in 1851 was thought to mark the beginning of a new era, when war should be no more. But three years later French, British, and Russians were fighting in the Crimea. Another three years, and the horrors of the Indian Mutiny had burst upon the world. In 1859 France and Austria were at strife, and Italy fought for her independence. The American civil war began in 1861. Austria and Prussia united against Denmark in 1864, and France attacked Mexico in a vain attempt to revive her western empire. In 1866 Prussia conquered Austria in a six weeks' campaign; in 1870 the Franco-German war began. Such were the two decades succeeding the commemoration of an undying peace.

---

[1] See Cobden's speech, 19th October 1843: 'I have never been one who believed that the repeal of the Corn Laws would throw an acre of land out of production. . . . I verily believe, if the principles of free trade were fairly carried out, they would give just as much stimulus to the demand for labour in the agricultural as in the manufacturing districts.' And again, on 8th February 1844: 'Free trade in corn is the very way to increase the production at home'; and, on 24th October 1844: 'There is no interest in this country that would receive so much benefit from the repeal of the Corn Laws as the farmer-tenant interest of this country.' Such was the forecast; the facts were that the acreage under crops in Britain declined enormously between 1850 and 1900. But Cobden could not, of course, foresee the immense expansion of the wheat-growing area of the world and the heavy fall in ocean freights, which destroyed what he termed 'natural protection.' (Cobden, 12th March 1844.)

Again the conflict of kingdoms had commenced; but a deeper meaning underlay the strife than the 'cabinet wars' of earlier days. The national and constitutional movement, which had been inaugurated by the French Revolution, now began to come into its own; what had been at most the dreams of some high-spirited youth, or the reveries of an obscure university professor, emerged at last into the practical politics with which a statesman must concern himself. The leaven worked upwards to the court, and downwards to the cottage. And the synthesis that the rulers of the preceding century had endeavoured with rough hands to construct now fell to the people to work out for themselves.

The European settlement of 1815 had seemed at first, indeed, to usher in a period of reaction on the Continent. The old sovereigns were restored to the thrones from which they had been so rudely ejected by Napoleon; but their actions speedily proved that they had learned nothing from the painful deposition. They were blind to the new forces, they were blind to the new ideals of the age; they were blind to the secret menace concealed in both. Living as they did in the false, protected atmosphere of courts from which the sharp but salutary winds of truth were carefully excluded, they relied on simple conservatism for their policy. 'Radicalism,' wrote the king of Hanover in 1837, 'was all the order of the day here. But I have cut the wings of this democracy.' As a fact, he abrogated the constitution altogether; and his attitude was typical of that of his brother monarchs.

But the spell of divine right had been broken by the French Revolution. Absolute monarchy had perished when Louis XVI. was brought from Versailles to the Tuileries by the citizens of Paris. The feudal system had perished when the French nobility fled for refuge abroad. The supremacy of the Church had perished when the priests flung their crucifixes on the table of the parliament. Seven years of heroic madness purged France of the mediævalism of ten centuries; and the thunder of her acts reverberated meaningly through the world. If the human soul was still often little better than a speck of dirt, it was a speck that was still impelled by strange external winds of class- and race-consciousness; a speck that at times drifted willingly before the hurricane of revolution, blinding not without joy those who stayed its way. . . .

The accumulated mass of uncertain socialism, of hate that longed for revenge, of fatalist despair, of vague nationalism, that had been spreading over Europe found vent at last. The revolutions of 1848 were no mere local risings, as were those of the mediæval Jacquerie; no mere national outbreak, as was that of France in 1789; no mere change of rulers as was that of Paris in 1830. They were the rebellion of a whole continent.

But rebellion alone is fruitless without a definite object; and it was the constitutional-nationalist movement that first justified itself by success. It was fitting that the two peoples who had given civilisation to Europe should be the first to achieve their independence. The ideals that animated the Greeks five centuries before the Christian era have since been the inspiration of every other white nation. The administration of the Romans, who brought the earliest stable government to the western world, has been the admiration of many centuries of statesmen. Yet the two peoples that breathed the breath of life into Europe, and from Europe into the larger outer world, had long fallen on evil days. The Greeks lay under the heel of an alien race, their literature despised, their religion detested, the very names of their cities changed.[1] And Italy was in hardly better condition. The glory of the empire and the renascence had alike faded. The hands of foreign masters crushed the peninsula. That dynasty, which of all the royal houses of Europe has most distinguished itself by an unswerving opposition to liberty, had worked its will on the fair land from the Alps to the Sicilies; the Hapsburgs had insulted and conquered every province of Italy. The Bourbons had been only less forward in the work of evil. The native princes were decadent and immoral; while the middle states, the property of the Roman Church, were drained to bankruptcy for her support. It was these two peoples of Greece and Italy, among all the degraded and oppressed provinces of Europe, that first made of their divided provinces two independent nations.

---

[1] The evil condition of the Greeks before and during the war of independence is movingly described in a little book entitled *Loukis Laras, Reminiscences of a Chiote Merchant*, by D. Bikelas. It was translated into English in 1881.

The movement for German union achieved its end almost at the same time. The aspirations of Fichte and other great dreamers and workers of the early nineteenth century had created a deep desire for unity throughout the Teutonic lands; but the practical difficulties were enormous. A complicated system of petty administrations cumbered the way. A lack of sympathy was shown by the lesser rulers, not unnatural when it is remembered that any general union inevitably led to their abolition; and the struggle for supremacy between Prussia, a typically modern state, and Austria, the historic head but the most backward member of the old empire, necessarily preceded the foundation of the mighty German empire of to-day.

While thus in Greece, in Italy, and in Germany the national and constitutional movements were intimately allied and successful, in other less fortunate lands only one or other principle worked, and achieved either a partial victory, or was at length altogether overcome. A complete system of parliamentary government and full local autonomy was instituted in Austria; but though the letter was conceded, the spirit was absent. No sense of cohesion animated the widely different peoples; and the first result of freedom was an outbreak of disintegrating forces and bitter racial enmity. In Spain the same effects ensued in less aggravated form; if the people received the privileges of liberty, they did not assume its responsibilities. Patriotism was still provincial and not national; rival claimants to the Crown distracted the land with civil war;[1] a riotous republicanism sprang up, and anarchy raised her poisonous head. In the east of Europe, the new Balkan states were unstable to a degree. Servia became a prey to a royalist vendetta, and elsewhere the racial feuds that were waged in the name of religion prevented any real advance.

Yet even where the nationalist movement failed politically, a more vigorous national life was evolved from the tumult, that left its mark upon the culture of the age. The separatist rising in Hungary was crushed for a time by Austria with the aid of Russian troops; but the two empires could not stamp out Hungarian patriotism. The stranger who compares the magnificence of modern Buda-Pest, where stately domes and pinnacles overlook broad Danube, with the fortress and collection of hovels that alone marked the last outpost of the western world on the near eastern frontier a century before, will appreciate the material results of Hungarian nationalism; the musician who listens to the Magyar melodies preserved in the setting of Liszt's wild rhapsodies, or the student who pores over the romances of Jokai, will understand something of the spiritual force with which the new movement quickened Hungary.

In Bohemia, where the racial feud of Czech and German hung indecisive, a minor national literature sprang up on the banks of the Moldau, and the weird music of Dvorak interpreted the heart of a passionate, fickle people to those who understood not a word of their tongue.

---

[1] When I lived in Venice in the spring of 1903, the defeated claimant, Don Carlos, was often to be seen in his steam-launch on the canals and lagoons; and some months later, during a few weeks spent in Bilbao, I found he had still many partisans in Spain. In those days he looked an unlikely conqueror; thirty years previously it may have been otherwise. He died in 1909.

The Poles were perhaps more unfortunate, since the one nation was split up among three empires. The insurrection of 1863 against Russia failed; the Polish provinces of Germany were shaped under an iron administration; and while in Austria the Poles obtained a constitution, their acute disagreements with the Ruthenians led to incessant faction fighting and frequent fatal riots.[1] Yet, if material progress was denied the Poles, the stream of national life still ran swift and strong in other channels. Education, save among the peasants, progressed steadily; a brilliant but too little known literature flourished; and the music of Chopin furnished the final expression of the emotional soul of the people for all time.

The tide of nationalism ebbed and flowed, succeeded or failed, in various parts of Europe, according as the character of the people or the circumstances of politics allowed. But the movement was not confined to the western nations; for as the ripple from a pebble cast into a pond reaches in time from shore to shore, so did the new impetus extend in stronger or weaker form, in real or fantastically contorted shapes, to the ends of the earth.

A terrible struggle of nihilism with autocracy began the revolt against the old conditions in Russia. No national feeling could exist, for, though there was a forced unity of administration, no popular union obtained among the varied races of the empire. But when the impulse towards constitutional rule grew too strong to be ignored, the Czar at length summoned a parliament, only to hamper its work, and finally to dismiss it. ‘They have strayed into spheres beyond their competence,’ declared Nicholas II.; but while ukase succeeded to ukase, the real movement went on, apart, untouched, its leaders contemptuous of concessions, but exasperated by the weakness that alternately proclaimed and withdrew, and then again proclaimed, a parliament and martial law. The situation was extraordinary; for in place of any knowledge of western systems of government, Russia had all the new western inventions exerting their influence on her half-barbaric soil. Men who were still in the middle ages, so far as their political liberty was concerned, used the railway, the electric tramway, and the telephone, as a matter of course. With less political freedom than an Englishman under Rufus, they could travel quicker than an Englishman under George III.; with a people more illiterate than the English at the reformation, and a censorship more stringent than we have ever submitted to,[1] the government received intelligence at Petersburg from Vladivostok or Turkestan a few minutes after the event.

---

[1] A nine months' sojourn in Galicia in 1904-5 convinced me that the antagonism between Pole and Ruthenian, being religious and social as well as political, was as real as that between Pole and Prussian. The Ruthenians, who were then emigrating in large numbers to Canada, often expressed to me their appreciation of the contrast between the freedom of British institutions and the double tyranny of Austrian and Pole, or Russian and Pole, in Eastern Europe.

But while professor and peasant, noble and workman, artisan and priest met together in one representative Russian council, conflicting currents of thought agitated every province. The bourgeois, passionately attached to Crown and Church, were unwilling to part from the old paths, since in them they had prospered. The peasantry were divided, the elder generation orthodox to a degree, the younger loosing themselves from old landmarks, feeling the quickenings of new life, but uncertain as yet and half-afraid to turn from the well-trodden road. The proletariat of the new industrial towns, full of vague theories of reform, insisted on the right of self-rule, but showed small power of self-control; while the aristocracy and the corrupt bureaucracy[1] distrusted the new movement altogether, and the professional classes, who aspired to the direction of the new forces, proved lacking in the cohesion and character necessary to their ends; and from this chaotic mass, in which every element was at war with every other, order was only evolved, when liberty proved unattainable, under the stern control of a Stolypin.

---

[1] The Russian censorship of the Press is, or was a few years ago, the most efficient department of an inefficient bureaucracy. I have been assured, by those who ought to know, that it was the only department which was above being bribed; but I should not care to accuse any Russian official of the rare and unprofitable quality of incorruptibility.

Further east, in Japan the national garments of a thousand years were thrown aside in a decade; and by sudden radical reform instead of gradual development, the island empire claimed, and vindicated its claim, to rank with the foremost powers of the earth. But while the Japanese copied part of the western machinery of government, they retained many of their own institutions; it was the western instruments of force, the British navy and the German army, that they imitated, rather than its constitutions; the nationalist spirit they had no need to copy, for they already possessed it in an overpowering degree.

There followed an epochal war with Russia in 1904; and as the first victories of an Asiatic over a semi-European state[2] resounded through the East, the spirit of unrest invaded the conservative Orient. China was stirred to her depths; on the one hand some strove to imitate Japan in imitating European models, to seize the opportunity of engrafting on the world's oldest but long outworn civilisation the spirit of the most advanced thought of the twentieth century. On the other hand, and possibly more powerful as an appeal to racial prejudice, some wished also to take the victories of Japan as a driving force, but to use those victories as a means of generating hatred of the white man, and of excluding him definitely and finally from Asia. And between the two lay the bulk of the people, passive, superficially quiescent, fundamentally perturbed.

---

[1] 'There is not an honest man among them all,' was a remark in a play produced at Petersburg some years ago. A visit to Russia in 1905 gave me no cause to dispute the assertion. The corruption of the bureaucracy may be studied in Gogol's classic comic drama, *The Inspector*.

[2] The Russians themselves admitted, and indeed claimed with pride, before the war with Japan that they were a semi-Asiatic state.

Persia also, bankrupt and effete, the prey of foreign concession hunters and internal corruption, was galvanised into some semblance of activity by the contemporary examples of Japanese victories and the Russian duma. In response to grave tumults, a parliament of princes, nobles, clergy, merchants, and traders was convened by the Shah; but the new constitution only precipitated a revolution three years later in 1909.

Deep answers unto deep; Islám unto Islám. The changes in Persia were simultaneous with popular discontent in Turkey; and Sultan Abdul Hamid II., who had already granted and abrogated a constitution, gave way with seeming readiness in 1908 to the demand for reform. A year later he was deposed by the Young Turk party.

Thus baldly and superficially one may summarise the constitutional and nationalist movements of the later Victorian age. In no case were the sympathies of England withheld from the smaller nations that were 'rightly struggling,' in the phrase which Gladstone applied to the Mahdists of the Sudan, 'to be free'; but as the revolutions in Europe and Asia gave sign of the approach of a new world-struggle in which England herself might once more have to fight for her empire and perhaps for her very existence, the time came when our own people awoke to the inevitable consequences of the Little England policy in which they had acquiesced. They had been misled for a while by the superficially correct but fundamentally incorrect reasoning which taught that there was no advantage in the maintenance of empire; no commercial advantage, that is to say, for the politicians of the Little England school considered no other advantage worth calculating. The colonial trade, said Cobden, was ten millions sterling a year, and colonial administration cost half that sum; as a business proposition, therefore, the empire was not worth preserving.

The nation thought otherwise. It had no logical refutation with which to silence those who encouraged the Colonial Office to snub the colonies, and to hint that separation was the ultimate and not unwelcome goal to which all tended; it had no ready-made demonstration that the trade of the empire was not its sole strength and a merchant's ledger its sole justification. It had as yet little sense of that kinship with the younger English nations overseas which was to become the main strength of imperialism in the next generation; the movement was at first hardly more than a revolt from the teaching of the Little Englanders. The constructive thought and the imaginative literature of imperialism came some years after the popular awakening.

The Imperial Movement in Britain.

But nevertheless the first phase of the new British imperialism was the revolt of the later Victorians from the Little England doctrines of their fathers. The cosmopolitan-commercial creed of Cobden was tried in the balance against the national and constitutional movement abroad; and it was found wanting. The commercial supremacy of Britain was threatened by the growth of foreign manufactures. The cosmopolitan theory of international brotherhood could not survive the growth of a strong national sentiment, with strong national jealousies and rivalries, on the Continent. And the ideal of a commercial peace grew dim when the whole of Europe was transformed into an armed camp, when regiments and battleships were multiplied year by year, and when other nations began to enlarge their territories and to adopt a policy of colonial expansion.

The Little Englanders protested in vain against the change; outside forces were too strong for them. While they would have sacrificed the unity of their own or of any other country rather than strike a blow in its defence[1] Bismarck was cementing the union of Germany by a policy of 'blood and iron,' and Abraham Lincoln was preserving the union of the English republic in America by civil war. While they were advocating the disruption of their own empire on the ground that it was a source of weakness, other nations were building up new empires in the conviction that empire was a source of strength. While the Little Englanders were counselling the British colonies to separate from the motherland, the colonies remained steadily loyal to the imperial connection; and even while spreading their theories at home, their own countrymen revolted from their doctrines.

They had been impotent to stay the expansion of England; for the two forces that had made the empire—the love of adventure and the need of bread—had not ceased to exist in Victorian times.[2] They had been impotent when they

[1] 'Before the first shot was fired I wrote to say that if I were a New Englander I would vote with both hands for a peaceful separation.'—Cobden on the American Civil War, 18th January 1863.

[2] Emigration was constant through the whole Victorian age; it was directed mainly to Canada, Australia, and the United States; in less degree to South Africa. The movement drained the rural districts of Britain almost as seriously as the parallel movement to the great manufacturing towns; the reason for its existence was in both cases similar. The agricultural labourer had no opportunity of improving his position; his earnings were small (even in 1907 his annual earnings in England averaged but £47, 15s.) and he had no chance of obtaining land, particularly since the Enclosure Acts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century had divorced him from any hold upon the soil. See vol. v. bk. xxii.

If he migrated to a manufacturing town he might get higher wages; if he went to a colony land was offered him at low rates and on easy terms. Little wonder then that the brightest and most ambitious lads left their native villages for town or colony. The tendency was accelerated, particularly in Scotland, by the practice of using land that might have been employed in agriculture for sport and game preserves. A successful policy of small holdings would have done much to check the stream of emigration, by giving the labourer some chance of bettering his condition at home.

attempted to destroy the Empire as it already stood, for the colonies had not accepted the invitation to declare their independence. And when the new imperial spirit awoke among the English people as the counterpart of the rising spirit of nationalism abroad, the Little Englanders were equally impotent to stay its progress.[1] Henceforth, save for one brief period of power, they were a negative and diminishing factor in the politics of Britain; the wider patriotism which is called imperialism began to supplant the insular doctrine which had been the guiding rule of British statesman in early Victorian days.

Imperialism and Democracy, 1876.

It is a profoundly significant fact that the first signs of the new imperialism appeared within a decade of the new democratic movement in England. In 1867 the parliamentary franchise was largely extended, and the votes of the working-classes for the first time exercised considerable weight in the elections; by 1876 the democratised nation was supporting the conservative cabinet in a policy that was avowedly aimed at imperial expansion.

Whatever else the newly-enfranchised democracy might be, it was not anti-imperial. The people of England had always been famed for the vigour of their patriotism, whose very fervour had sometimes led them into strange excesses and mistakes; they now made it evident that the industrial development of Britain had not changed their ancient character, and that they took as great a pride in enlarging the power of the Empire as they had of old in enlarging the power of the nation. They had grown weary of the doctrines of non-intervention and insular isolation that had been preached by the Little Englanders; after many years of quiet concentration on her own internal affairs, Britain was again ready for action and adventure abroad.

---

[1] A moral change in public opinion may also be noted. Englishmen were no longer ashamed of the tropical colonial planter as a slave-owner, but they had learnt to be proud of the colonial administrator in Africa and the East as a slavery suppressor. And in this respect the gross slanders of a Cobden against a Rájá Brooke helped to bring about a reaction of moral sentiment, just as the falsification of some free trade prophecies helped towards the acceptance of the maxim, which would have been anathema to Cobden, that 'trade follows the flag.'

Those who had no imperial sentiment themselves believed that others were equally lacking; but it was perhaps the greatest error of the Little Englanders that they failed to realise that the temper of their countrymen was not wholly commercial and not always peaceful.

The new imperialism against which they fought was sometimes commercial[1] and sometimes frankly brutal in its reliance on superior force;[2] and in these respects it offered an easy target for effective criticism. It was sometimes purely adventurous in spirit, at heart a rebellion against the conventional fetters of an old and crowded civilisation, a revolt against the staid commercialism of the industrial age. In this respect it might be praised or condemned; it could not be suppressed, since it sprang from the still exuberant vitality of the national stock.

It was also objected that the new imperialism was vulgar, noisy, and assertive in many of its manifestations. That was indeed true; but the criticism was merely an unconscious admission that it was a popular movement, and one that had taken firm hold of the democracy. Every movement that appeals to all classes necessarily has its vulgar side, its noisy demonstrations, its blatant and offensive elements; and the imperial awakening in Victorian Britain was not exempt from a universal rule which applies to religion and politics alike.[1] Vitality is often terribly vulgar; anæmia, both physical and mental, is far more refined.

---

[1] It was probably this aspect of it which provoked Merriman, the South African politician, to say that 'the words Imperialist and Empire have been so done to death by every wretched little Jew stockbroker in this country that I am sick of them.'—Lady Sarah Wilson's *South African Memories*, 1909. The remark was not without considerable justification. However, I do not know that Merriman could ever have been described as a very robust imperialist.

[2] This aspect of imperialism was magnificently repudiated in Kipling's 'Recessional.'

But in its highest, most permanent and inspiring form the new imperialism reached out to an aspiration after the union of the English people at home and overseas; it became a great political and social ideal which could animate the heart of every man who still acknowledged the ties of blood and kinship. 'The object of colonisation,' said Gladstone on one occasion, 'is the reproduction of the image and likeness of England, of those laws and institutions, those habits and national characteristics, which have made England famous.' The object of imperialism at its best was to bind those lands on which the image and likeness of England had been stamped, those new nations that had sprung from the womb of mother England, into a permanent family union of sister states.

The new imperialism in England was therefore inevitably constructive and unionist in principle, and in this it was sharply opposed to the principles of the liberal politicians and Little Englanders of the day, who had anticipated the entire separation of the colonies from the mother country at no distant date. And during the remainder of the Victorian age, the struggle between the two forces, of imperial union and of imperial disruption, or at least of imperial weakness, was acute; but it was a struggle in which, on the whole, the advantage ultimately rested with the imperialists.

In its deeper essentials the controversy was the eternal and interminable conflict between centrifugal and centripetal forces, whose balance secures the proper equilibrium of nations as of nature. But the contest was complicated by the intrusion of the less vital issues of British domestic politics. It was inevitable that men should take opposite sides in the controversy, as they had done in the essentially similar controversy a century before in the United States,[1] when Alexander Hamilton stood for union, and his opponent, Jefferson, stood for the practical independence of each individual state; it was equally inevitable that the division of opinion in England should follow generally the accepted lines of party politics.

---

[1] The history of mediæval Christianity is full of examples of the vulgar element in religion, particularly in the miracle plays and moralities. In our own time the methods of the Salvation Army at home, and of some itinerant missionaries abroad, might also be cited. I remember at Epsom Downs on Derby Day after the great race a few years back, seeing an evangelist carrying a banner inscribed 'A Sure Tip for the Great Race of Life. The Saviour of Mankind a Certain Winner. Let me put Your Money on Him.' The thing, which was an exact reproduction of the ordinary bookmaker's advertisement, struck me as horrible in the extreme; but the preacher seemed to have a large audience.

There were Little Englanders among the conservatives, but the majority followed Disraeli in his conversion to imperialism; there were imperialists among the liberals, but the majority followed Gladstone in condemning expansion and in giving but a lukewarm support to the movement for imperial consolidation. Like Jefferson, the British liberals insisted on the freedom and strength of the individual local unit, whose liberties they had done so much to extend; like Hamilton, the British conservatives now insisted on the union and strength of the whole empire, whose firm consolidation they wished to secure. The liberals thought of the bricks which they had helped to make, but distrusted the mortar which should bind them together; the conservatives thought of the mortar, but occasionally forgot that the bricks were not all of the same size and shape.

But although the new imperialism was contemporary with, and largely supported by, the new democracy, it cannot be maintained that the nascent democracy of England was at first largely influenced by any common sympathy with the more advanced English democracies in Canada and Australia. There was as yet little general knowledge of colonial conditions in Britain; and the tradition that the colonies were mainly populated by Englishmen who had left their country for their country's good was still prevalent.

---

[1] See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv. There was a similar division of opinion in Australia (vol. v. bk. xix. ch. iii.) on the question of federation; and in South Africa (vol. vi.). The Canadian federation question is fully discussed in vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v.

It was in its picturesque and adventurous aspect, in fact, rather than on its more stable and constructive side, that imperialism first appealed to Britain. The nation was first startled and then pleased by the dramatic declaration of Disraeli in 1866 that Britain was 'no longer a mere European power, [but] the metropolis of a great maritime empire, extending to the boundaries of the furthest ocean. . . . She is really more of an Asiatic than a European power.' The statement was no more than the truth; and the imagination of England kindled as the splendour of her oriental dominions was brought home to her when Disraeli advised Victoria to assume the title of Empress of India, when his purchase of shares in the Suez Canal and the occupation of Cyprus strengthened the ocean highway of Britain to the East.[1]

The people forgot the disastrous outcome of the first Afghán war fifty years earlier in the new attempt to advance the Indian frontier; and they remembered—what they had at times been nearly tempted to forget—the true doctrine of the interdependence of British naval and colonial power which had been enunciated by the political philosopher of Cromwell's time two centuries before. 'The sea gives the law to the growth of Venice,' wrote James Harrington in his survey of *Oceana*, 'but the growth of Oceana gives the law to the sea.' The expansion of England overseas was at once the cause and the effect of her naval supremacy.

Such principles and such a policy were anathema to the Little Englanders, whose hatred for Disraeli as a man and as a statesman passed the bounds even of decency when he

---

[1] A fanciful sketch of England as the head of an Oriental Empire, which appears in Disrael's novel *Tancred*, shows that the idea had been in his mind for some time before he took practical action towards its fulfilment.

The Little England Reaction, 1880-85.

dared to disregard their cherished convictions.[1] Their influence was still strong, and they took the full and legitimate party advantage of the mistakes and embarrassments of the conservative government. Gladstone put himself openly at their head, sweeping the country in the Midlothian electioneering tour which has become known as 'the pilgrimage of passion,' and denouncing the new imperialism as an orgy of insane jingoism: a decisive victory crowned his rhetoric at the polls, and by April 1880, a liberal administration committed to the Little England policy was in power.

The national revulsion seemed decisive.[2] If this was indeed the new god of empire which Gladstone had pictured—but it was not—it was a false god in whose worship honest men could have no share; and the pure blood of imperialism, which had been coursing through the arteries of the English body politic, returned fouled and poisoned to its fount.

But the melancholy record of the next five years proved that the Little England ideal was dead beyond recall as a practical policy. The interests of Britain could not be divorced from those of her empire; and the statesmen who declared in favour of isolation were unable to change the sweeping tide of national destiny. They did their best to stop expansion, to rid themselves of responsibilities which they disliked, to put back the hands of the clock in every quarter of the world. They might as well have bidden the waves of the Atlantic to retire; for they only succeeded in damaging their own reputation as the guardians of the empire, and in splitting into two irreconcileable sections the great party to which they belonged.

---

[1] See particularly the violent letters of E. A. Freeman in *The Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff* (1909). The conservative administration was 'a Jew government'; its policy was 'the drunken insolence of the Jew,' and the Afghán war was 'the private crime of the Jew and his accomplice' (Lord Lytton). When the Indian troops were summoned to Malta by Disraeli, Freeman wrote, 'What will the Hebrew vizier of the Empress of India do, backed by the barbarians by whom he is seeking to tread down England and Europe, and turn the world into one great Asian mystery?' The liberalism which the historian of the Norman Conquest professed obviously did not cover religion and politics.

[2] Many patriotic liberals thought, and with reason, that the reaction went too far. 'It has produced an awful kind of anti-patriotic cant which has become so much the thing among the radicals that it is one of the chief signs of liberal orthodoxy,' wrote William Arnold, a Manchester liberal, at this time.—*Life of Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster.*

They promptly reversed the imperial policy of their predecessors. With bitter sarcasm Disraeli condemned Gladstone's precipitate retreat from Afghánistán as a 'policy of scuttle'; and Bismarck, the dominant statesman of the Continent, quickly took the measure of the liberal premier in foreign affairs. 'Gladstone did nothing but further Russian interests in the East,' said the great Prussian, 'and left the interests of England out of account.'[1] Some three years later Bismarck found that Gladstone would sacrifice with equal readiness the interests of England in Africa and Australia in deference to the new German colonial policy. The concessions did not, as might have been foreseen, diminish the growing ill-feeling against Britain in Germany.[2] They did not diminish the demands of Bismarck, who had already confessed that his policy aimed at 'the supremacy of Germany in Europe, and of the German race in the world,'[3] and whose appetite for expansion grew larger as his contempt for the British Government increased. But the concessions were more than enough to rouse a storm of protest in Australia at the continued impotence of the imperial authorities.[4]

---

[1] See the *Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe*, 26th November 1880; also under date 2nd November 1884: 'Gladstone may remain in office. It will be good for us, not for England.'

[2] 'I am not yet thoroughly well informed in regard to the causes of the violent antagonism of a great part of our German press against England.'—Bismarck, quoted in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*.

[3] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, 10th May 1873, in *Life of Lord Granville*.

[4] 'Gladstone saw that a choice had to be made, and recognised that the continued hostility of Germany was a greater danger than the irritation of Australia.'—*Life of Lord Granville*. But Gladstone's policy allayed neither the hostility of Germany nor the irritation of Australia. Such are the usual fruits of weakness.

While Lord Granville, the respectable mediocrity who presided over the British Foreign Office, was as clay in the hands of the potter when dealing with the masterful Bismarck, other events elsewhere were demonstrating the weakness of the Cabinet in colonial affairs. The defeat of the British troops by the South African Boers at Majuba Hill in 1881 was left unavenged, in order that England might be saved, as Gladstone remarked, 'from sheer bloodguiltiness.'[1] Neither the British nor the Boers believed an excuse which, to have been valid, should have been made before military operations began and, indeed, should have prevented any military operations at all; both sides attributed the surrender to cowardice. And that impression was only strengthened by the subsequent dealings of the liberal cabinet with the Transvaal.[2]

There was, however, one part of the world where the imperial authorities made a step forward. They regretted the necessity of intervention in Egypt. They promised themselves that they would retire as soon as possible, although Gladstone had already foretold four years previously that 'our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African empire, that will grow and grow . . . till we finally join hands across the equator with Natal and Cape Town.'[3] But nevertheless they occupied Egypt, and thereby stumbled inadvertently on the one considerable piece of constructive work which stands to their name in our history overseas. Yet nemesis pursued the Little Englanders who had suffered themselves to forsake their own principles of non-intervention; and the tragic death of Gordon in the Sudan was a more grievous blot upon their fame than any of the acts with which they had been more intimately associated.

---

[1] London *Times*, 15th April 1881.

[2] That Gladstone's action should have been attributed to cowardice was natural in a world that seldom judges its great men charitably; but in this case it was unjust. The liberal premier was one of the most courageous of men, and here, as at other times during his career, what was judged as cowardice was in reality an act of mistaken courage, induced by an adherence to a principle that the force of events had rendered impossible.

[3] This remarkable prediction was made in the *Nineteenth Century* for 1878.

This was not a policy but the negation of a policy; it was 'nothing but slip and slide,' as the Duke of Argyll, a revolted liberal, justly stigmatised it. United action was in fact impossible, for the Cabinet were divided in their views; and while John Bright, the leading Little Englander of the day, had resigned his office when England intervened in Egypt, the Secretary for War had threatened resignation when his colleagues delayed sending the relief expedition which might have saved Gordon at Khartum.[1] At home, indeed, the record of the Cabinet had been far more successful as regards the control of internal affairs. But here again they differed upon the fundamental question of the union of Great Britain and Ireland; and the political crisis which resulted from Gladstone's adoption of Irish Home Rule ended in the division of the liberal party and its exclusion from power for nearly twenty years.

Such were the miserable fruits of the Little Englanders' principles when applied in imperial politics. Under the spell of Gladstone's marvellous eloquence, the nation had accepted those principles in theory; but when it was found that in practice they led directly to national weakness and imperial disruption, to the abandonment of territory, the sacrifice of military honour, and the desertion of a gallant if erratic soldier in the Sudan, the people promptly repudiated both the principles of the Little Englanders and the political party which had adopted them.

Even while those principles were still the guiding rule of the Cabinet, there were many who protested against the negative policy of abandonment, desertion, and disruption; and such dissentients were by no means confined to one section of political thought.[1] The feeling in favour of closer union between Britain and her colonies was likewise growing stronger at the very time when the opponents of closer union were in power; and while an offer of military help from Australia during the Sudan campaign of 1885 was warmly welcomed in England as a sign of imperial solidarity in the face of external difficulties, a movement to promote the unity of the Empire was started in 1884, under the title of the Imperial Federation League, by prominent men of both political parties in Britain.

---

[1] See letter from Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, 15th July 1884. 'I enclose the result of our deliberations to-day. I hope there may be a Cabinet to-morrow or very soon to decide on this. At the last Cabinet when it was mentioned I got five minutes at the fag end, and was as usual put off. Another fortnight has passed, and the end of the session is approaching. I cannot be responsible for the military policy in Egypt under such conditions.—Yours, HARTINGTON.'

The Imperialist Revival, 1886-1902.

The way was thus prepared; and when the conservatives, who were now definitely committed to a strong unionist policy at home and a strong imperial policy overseas, were returned to power in the year 1886, a great era of imperial expansion and consolidation began, the effects of which were to be felt long after the last of the Victorian statesmen had sunk into his grave.

The imperialist revival, which dominated British politics until the end of the century and continued with hardly abated force during the whole Edwardian period, had two sharply differentiated though not opposed aspects. It aimed, in the first place, at enlarging the Empire by the acquisition of fresh territory; and, in the second, at consolidating the empire by a closer political union of its various and scattered provinces. The first aim was primitive, fundamental, and, to a nation conspicuous for its pioneering abilities, relatively easy; the second aim, on the other hand, called for the highest and most delicate form of constructive statecraft, for mutual sacrifices to the common good, and for that most difficult of combinations, sustained popular enthusiasm as a driving force and cool wisdom as a controlling lever. The first was immediately and triumphantly successful; the second advanced far more slowly, but none the less the idea of imperial consolidation made steady progress from year to year.

---

[1] See the speeches of Joseph Cowen, a prominent radical of the time. 'Every tribe we touch,' he said, 'acknowledges our supremacy, and looks to us either in conscious fear of weakness, or with brightening hopes of participating in our elevation. To secure the existence and rivet the cohesion of the vast dominion, blest with one of the highest forms of freedom that the world has ever seen, to carry to distant countries and succeeding ages the loftiest form of civilisation, is our mission. To abandon the opportunity of usefulness thus conferred, to throw aside the hope of securing equal rights and impartial freedom, to destroy the means of establishing a feeling of fraternity and consciousness of common, material interests among so many millions of our fellow-beings, would be a narrow, a niggardly, a short-sighted and a selfish policy for a great nation to pursue.' (The *Speeches of Joseph Cowen*, 1910.) The policy which Cowen thus condemned in 1880 was the policy of his own leaders.

Renewed Expansion.

Although many still set their faces against any enlargement of the boundaries of empire, the nation as a whole was now decisively in favour of increasing its oversea possessions; and the anxiety which foreign powers had shown and were yet showing in the attempt to forestall Britain in the unclaimed territories of the earth was a sufficient argument to the plain man that expansion was necessary and desirable.[1]

Once again the growth of outer Britain proceeded apace. If the late Gladstone and Granville Government had been outwitted in its imperial policy by Germany, it can hardly be claimed that their successors in Downing Street did not make ample amends for the shortcomings of the Little Englanders in this respect. Vast territories were annexed in central, east and west Africa. The Sudan was reconquered, and the death of Gordon was avenged; in the south of that continent, the colossal schemes of Cecil Rhodes were carried out, and the Union Jack was planted far beyond the waters of the Zambesi. The century-long strife between Briton and Boer came to a head when the English annexation of Rhodesia cut off the last retreat of those stubborn Dutch farmers into the interior; and the great South African war, which taxed the strength of England severely for nearly three years, closed in 1902 with the recognition of British sovereignty over Transvaal and the Orange River.

---

[1] Seeley's *Expansion of England* was published at this time and exercised considerable influence.

And Consolidation.

This rapid growth of empire necessarily absorbed much of the vital energies of Britain; the development and administration of her possessions demanded a still greater expenditure of national strength. And the stirring episodes which accompanied her expansion, the incidents of warfare, of pioneering, of adventure in unknown and still savage lands, tended at times to distract the attention from that other imperial problem of the later Victorian age, the consolidation, as distinguished from the expansion of the empire.

Yet here also a definite advance was visible. The Little Englanders of a previous generation had loved to dwell on the conflicting interests of the old nation and the new empire: the broader view of the imperialist now remarked on the essential affinity between the two; and where the old nation and the new empire were indeed found to conflict, he endeavoured to reconcile and harmonise their interests. A new political situation had arisen with the growth of the colonies towards maturity; and while their earlier provincial patriotism had quickly developed into a strong national sentiment, the old insular patriotism of Britain now began to broaden out into the wider imperial patriotism that recognised Canada and Australia to be as essentially British as were Yorkshire and Devon.

The assistance which Britain had ungrudgingly given to her colonies in their infancy was now returned as their young manhood sprang to her side in the South African war, as their free legislatures made voluntary contributions to the upkeep of the imperial navy, as their commercial men gave preferential treatment to her trade in the construction of their tariffs. The irony of commercial barriers against British trade in the British oversea states still indeed continued, a monumental example of the lack of foresight which the English free traders had shown in mid-Victorian times; but if their unfounded assumption, that free trade would prove universal, had rendered free trade impossible within the limits of the Empire, the colonies frankly offered to reduce their tariffs still further in the event of Britain giving them an equal preference at home.

But a review of the great fiscal controversy which arose out of this offer and the protectionist propaganda of Joseph Chamberlain in England would carry us far beyond the limits of this chapter. The tariff agitation belonged to Edwardian rather than Victorian times; but its inception may be noted here as another sign of the advancing imperial sentiment of the age.

In other respects, the original federation movement had failed; the Imperial Federation League had done good work, but it had proved premature. Its supporters were neither numerous nor strong enough to solve the difficulties which surrounded the problem of federating an empire which consisted of many diverse races and creeds; and the inertia of the general public on this matter was sufficient to damn the efforts of a private organisation.

The parallel example of the United States a century before had proved that the federation of sovereign states could only be achieved under the pressure of overwhelming political necessity. At the close of the Victorian age the oversea English states were for all practical purposes as independent of the mother country as the divided American states were of each other after the Peace of Versailles in 1783; but whereas the menace of anarchy and the genius of Alexander Hamilton had succeeded in uniting the republic, there was no such evident and overpowering necessity for the federation of the British Empire. The loose tie of fraternal sympathy was regarded by most of its citizens as a sufficient bond of union;

it needed time to prove that popular sentiment must be strengthened by a united political organisation.

The Colonial-Imperial Conference.

But in the meantime the unofficial Colonial Conference, which assembled for the first time in the year 1887, was developing into a regularly-convened assembly of Dominion Premiers, who consulted in London every four years under the presidency of the British Premier, and whose deliberations on questions of defence, trade, and foreign policy rightly gave the Imperial Conference—as it was called for the first time in 1907—considerable weight in shaping the public opinion of the Empire.

The question of imperial expansion was therefore definitely settled in the affirmative during the closing years of the nineteenth century; the more intricate problems of imperial consolidation, however, were left as a legacy to the twentieth.

Close of the Victorian Age, 1899.

The great Victorian age, which had begun with the pessimistic forebodings of imperial disruption in 1837, drew to a close with the gorgeous demonstration of imperial strength at the Diamond Jubilee, sixty years later, when representatives of the widening British power met together in London to do honour to their sovereign from the ends of the earth. And the Victorian age itself may be said to have ended with the outbreak of the South African war on 11th October 1899. The queen indeed lived rather more than a year longer, until on 22nd January 1901, the gentle and perhaps not unwelcome hand of death terminated her long and splendid but arduous reign. But during the last few months of her life the aged monarch's strength was visibly failing, and her influence in the national councils grew sensibly less; and although her end came with a shock of painful surprise to the majority of her people, those nearest the throne were not unprepared for the end.

Most of the men who had been the chief ornaments of her reign were dead, or their work was already done. Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley were all gone. The strenuous life of Gladstone had closed, after a long illness suffered with quiet patience, on Ascension Day, 1898. Disraeli, his great opponent, had been in his grave seventeen years when Gladstone died. The career of Salisbury, under whose government the great movement of renewed imperial expansion had been directed and controlled, was near its end. Dickens, Thackeray, and Macaulay had passed away a generation back. Tennyson had crossed the bar seven years since; Browning had died before his brother poet. Swinburne's songs had all been sung. Ruskin's work was finished. Herbert Spencer's voice was henceforth silent, save for one solemn protest against the South African war; Carlyle and his biographer Froude had both gone where no earthly criticism could touch them more.

Another generation now grappled not unsuccessfully with the problems of empire. New tendencies, not all of them noble, appeared on the crowded scene; and amid a welter of confused social, moral and political changes, the great Victorian age passed from being into history.

END OF VOLUME THE FOURTH

a sh
thos

M
reign

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 10019 366 1